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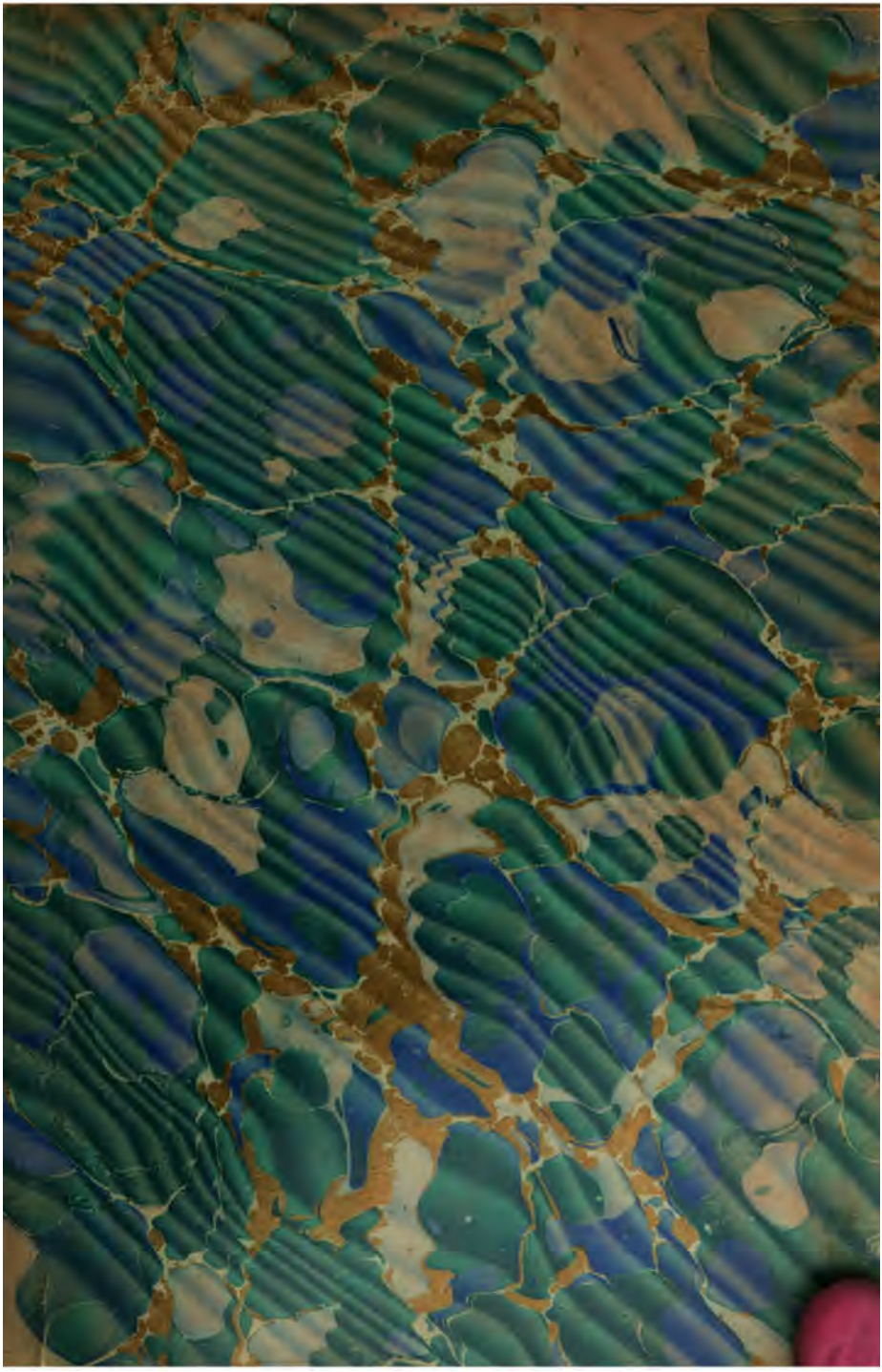

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PREFACE

THE popular appreciation of Italian sculpture at the present time practically recognises one name alone, that of Michel Angelo; and if a vague consciousness exists of other names behind his, they are for the most part dismissed as "quaint," and of genuine interest only to the curious.

Thus Donatello—the "scultore rarissimo e statuario maraviglioso" of Vasari, the object of even Buonarotti's imitation—is to-day generally reckoned as a mere Renaissance forerunner, and by no means as himself one of the Immortals.

Even professed students of Art have more or less shared in this inability to recognise his greatness. Cicognara, in his "Storia della Scultura," when concluding his notice of this master, remarks: "But if Donatello had discovered all the possibilities of the Art of Sculpture, what would have been left for Canova to achieve!" Truly, a time which could accept the exaltation of Canova at the expense of Donatello demonstrated the inferiority, not of the latter, but of itself. Be the reason of this insensibility to Donatello's power what it may, it is now manifestly passing away. Students, at any rate, are recognising that the admiration accorded him alike by contemporaries and followers, such as Michel Angelo and Cellini, was well founded.

The late Donatello festival in Florence was the out-

ward and visible sign that his own country again recognised the true quality of her son. In other countries a literature of conspicuous value is growing up around his name and works. In Germany are the writings of Herr Bode and Herr Semper, in France those of M. Müntz and M. Marcel Reymond, to go no further.

In England we have lagged somewhat behind, but doubtless because we have been led astray by certain notable false attributions. It is now generally admitted that the "St. Cecilia" of Lord Wemyss, and the Portrait bust of a Lady in the Museum of South Kensington, are not genuine Donatellos. It is for qualities other than mere grace and suavity and manual dexterity that we must look in the true work of Donatello.

In the following appreciation of the master the attempt has been made to form an estimate of him drawn from his undoubted works, and to indicate those qualities which are incontestably and peculiarly his own. Where critics of equal weight differ as to attributions or dates I have, as far as possible, stated both opinions, at the same time indicating towards which I myself have been led to incline. I take this opportunity of tendering my thanks to "Leader Scott" and to Miss Annie R. Evans of Florence for help and criticism given to me at the outset of my work, which I have found throughout to be invaluable.

H. R.

March 9, 1900.

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DONATELLO

PART I.—THE MASTER'S LIFE

CHAPTER I

THE FLORENCE OF DONATELLO

THE sculptor Donato di Niccolo di Betti Bardi, better known by the name of Donatello, was born, it is believed, in the year 1386, in the city of Florence, and died in the same city in 1466, his life thus covering a period of eighty years.

This statement, perfectly necessary in a biography, is at the same time singularly colourless and uninteresting unless accompanied by some realisation of the social and intellectual conditions which those years represent, and the general environment which Florence secured to an artist of that period. It will not then be deemed lost time, but, on the contrary, rather a *reculement pour mieux sauter*, if we preface the present study of Donatello by some slight survey of the world in which he lived, which made his life, and which he in his turn so potently influenced.

In the Proem to "Romola," George Eliot pictures to us the matchless prospect of the Arno valley as seen from the hill of San Miniato. There, enclosed, is the city of Florence, stretching along the river banks, linking them

by her bridges, and with her out-lying villas mingling almost with those of Fiesole on the opposite heights. The novelist notes the variations from this view which would strike the eye of an ancient inhabitant could he but return and look once again over his city, and see the modifications which time has brought about. And what these are, we may be helped to realise with some distinctness if we examine the background of a painting of the *Assumption of the Virgin*, attributed to Botticelli, and now in the National Gallery. In this we have, drawn by the artist, an actual picture of old Florence as it was in the fifteenth century. We see the city, not as yet stretching at her ease along the plain, but, lacking her suburbs, she is gathered up, as it were crouching ready for attack or surprise, and closely girdled by her still needed and unbroken line of walls and towers. This fact alone is infinitely significant, and indicates in a stroke the essence of mediæval life as contrasted with that of our modern world.

The sketch of the city in this *Assumption* we may take as fairly representing the outward appearance of the Florence of Donatello. Within this contracted and walled Florence, however, we must not consider that life went on in chains, even as to outward conditions, or that what we now term "old Florence" was of a fixed and unvarying form. On the contrary, as to-day the modern Florence is developing itself out of the old, and we see, with who shall say what feelings, a Piazza Vittore Emanuele take the place of a Mercato Vecchio, so was it in the fifteenth century. The mind and needs of the city still expressed themselves in its outward form by the hands of its artists; and all through our special

period Florence was, within her walls, energetically re-expressing herself, and the still older Florence, the city of Dante, was changing step by step into the city of the Medici.

The mention of this name brings us into touch with one of the most potent forces of the time; hence we must spare a few lines to consider in some degree the character and action of the first very prominent member of this great family,—Cosimo, the so-called Father of his Country.

So striking a contrast was this man's personality to that of the majority of his contemporaries, that at first sight he appears almost an alien to his time. In the fifteenth-century citizen he would seem to have embodied the spirit of what we are accustomed to deem the special product of the nineteenth—to wit, the financier of colossal affairs, the simple citizen to all outward seeming, who yet, by his network of transactions and masterly management, virtually holds in his hands the fate of nations. Such in effect was Cosimo the elder, and, by his life and dealings with, and influence upon his generation, he transformed his city, and ushered in a new epoch of her history.

The family of Medici was an old and an honourable one, but at the time of the birth of Cosimo it did not perhaps enjoy a higher reputation than a score of other noble families in the city, such as the Pazzi, the Strozzi, or the Albizzi. Cosimo, however, inherited a notably large fortune from his father Giovanni, and with it the genius to manipulate it with a skill and foresight before unexampled in even the mercantile city of Florence. Luck, too, being added to his good manage-

ment, his wealth steadily increased; while at the same time it became manifest that his genius was double-edged, for not only could he gain skilfully, but he could spend nobly and with discrimination. He became seized with the passion for building, and not for himself alone, but for the Church and the city. As he was also keenly sensitive to all the other artistic and intellectual influences of the early Renaissance, it in time came about that almost any great undertaking in the way of art or learning which had its birth in Florence at that day asked and received from Cosimo its sinews of war, and also intelligent sympathy and encouragement. Scholars and antiquaries gathered around him. Was any rare discovery made of MSS., or in Art, he was applied to in order that the treasure might be secured; was even any distant place in Greece or elsewhere deemed likely to reward a careful search by scholar or artist, Cosimo would finance the traveller, and rejoice with him in the spoil brought back; and withal he was an active citizen taking his due part in all the political life of the day.

The events of one notable year in Cosimo's life will serve in a remarkable degree to give us an insight into the state of the Florentine world at that time, the nature of the changes in process of evolution, and the place which Cosimo personally held with regard to Art, and the artists whom he had gathered round him.

Florence would not have been Florence had she witnessed the growth of her citizen's wealth and power with supreme indifference, much less with an unquestioning approbation. Some of Cosimo's fellow-nobles saw in his increasing greatness a menace to their civic

liberties, others were animated by personal jealousy; so, in good old Florentine fashion, a party was formed against him, the Council packed with his enemies, and in the year 1433 it passed on him a sentence of ten years' exile.

Who knows with what feelings the future "Father of his Country" left his city, like many a predecessor—Dante among them—branded a *fuoruscito*?

But what a contrast is exhibited between these older exiles and Cosimo de' Medici! The former, full of cursing and bitterness, flew from city to city craving protection or help, in order that they might wrest redress from their enemies, and meanwhile ate their hearts out in hungry longing for return.

Cosimo betook himself quietly to Venice, where he had established financial relations, and being well received, there he waited, making no application for armed help, nor indeed for aid of any kind.

We find in connection with this event one or two significant passages in Vasari's "Lives of the Painters and Sculptors." In his life of Michelozzo the architect, we find the following:—"In the year 1433, when Cosimo was exiled, Michelozzo, who loved him greatly, and was faithfully devoted to his person, voluntarily accompanied him to Venice, and would always remain with him the whole time of his stay there; wherefore in addition to the many designs and models which he made in that city, . . . Michelozzo constructed the Library of San Giorgio Maggiore. This was built by the command and at the expense of Cosimo. . . . Such was the occupation and such the amusements of Cosimo during that exile, from which,

having been recalled by his country in the year 1434, he returned almost in triumph, and Michelozzo with him."

A second passage from the same writer's "Life of Masaccio" supplements the one above quoted: "Not finding himself at ease in Florence, and stimulated by his love and zeal for Art, the master resolved to proceed to Rome. . . . But having received intelligence that Cosimo de' Medici, from whom he had received favour and protection, had been recalled from exile, he again repaired to Florence." Vasari's chatty paragraphs serve to throw a vivid light upon the state of Florentine affairs during Cosimo's absence, and much further may be read between the lines. Michelozzo was not the only artist loyally attached to his person; nor was Masaccio alone in "not finding himself at ease in Florence," and so betaking his active brain and skilful hands to other markets.

In short, the commercial and industrial, no less than the artistic life of the city was dislocated, in direct consequence of the decree of exile.

One of the notable works left at a standstill in this epoch-making year was Cosimo's great new palace in the Via Larga, now known as the Riccardi Palace. This is a characteristic example of the manner in which Florence was re-expressing herself in outward form, Cosimo leading the van in the process of change. If we mentally compare this stately and spacious palace with the cramped fighting tower which had formerly been the nobles' pride, and also their necessity, we are put in intimate touch with the character of the changing conditions. The old mediæval life

was dying; the palace, though still iron-barred in its lower storey, was yet within stately and beautiful in aspect, a place where the lives of men and women might expand, and in themselves individually become gracious and an Art. The palaces were notable signs, outward and visible, of the inward and spiritual of the time; while the novel and complex nature of Cosimo's grip upon his city, whether present or absent, indicated the change of social conditions.

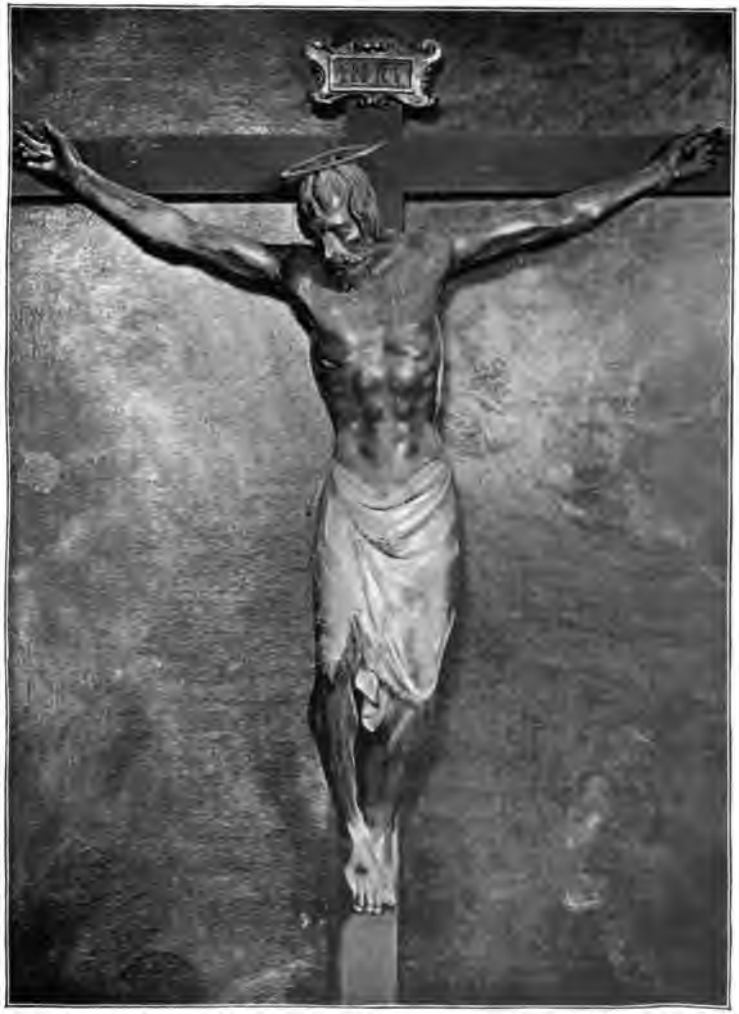
Under such circumstances, we see that the old-world Guelf and Ghibelline weapons which the conservative nobles had employed against this innovator,—the ten years' exile, the condition of *fuoruscito*,—of necessity fell powerless to effect their object. The suffering city rose against the anti-Medici faction, the ten years compressed themselves into one; as Vasari writes: "In 1434 he returned almost in triumph, *and Michelozzo with him.*" Into these last four words we may read a wider statement; not Michelozzo alone returned, but with him the whole tide of humanism flowed again, and Florence rose on the crest of the wave.

War and the Church no longer, as in the earlier times, claimed the whole of the life of society; all that which we understand by the word humanistic was beginning subtily to modify the conditions of daily life and thought.

In this transformation of existence in the city of Florence, Cosimo de' Medici was, as it were, in the hands of the gods, the most potent visible instrument. He prepared the way for the change, and gave opportunity for those specific and individual forces to

operate, the aggregation of which brought in the full Renaissance.

Hence some realisation of this man, and his position in Florence is essential to a just appreciation of the period as a whole, or of any individual who took prominent part in the life of the period.



Alinari photo] [*Santa Croce, Florence*

CRUCIFIX

CHAPTER II

TO THE YEAR 1426

IT now becomes our business to fit the subject of this essay into his environment, the Florence which we have been endeavouring to realise to ourselves. Our aim will be to see him as a man, living and working among his fellows; as comrade, friend, craftsman, and citizen. Genial in character, indeed lovable, we find this Donato di Betti Bardi to have been; and all the world greets him, even to the present time, as it were, with a friendly smile, under the name of Donatello, the kindly Tuscan variation on his name, speaking of a general good-will.

The well-known and generally accepted story of his boyhood, preserved to us by Vasari, gives in charming fashion an indication of his disposition; and to re-tell it seems to be the bounden duty of any biographer of the artist. The authorities of the church of Santa Croce in Florence, gave a commission to the young man to carve a life-sized crucifix in wood for their church. Already he had, in common with so many artists of the time, obtained his initial training in a goldsmith's workshop. But to undertake a work of such magnitude must have appeared to him an event of great importance. When completed, he was elated by the result. In this mood, he called upon his friend

Filippo Brunellesco, his senior by some years, to come and see the work. When Filippo saw the crucifix, we are told he remained silent, though unable to repress something of a smile. Donato, however, pressed impetuously for some expression of opinion, and being constrained to speak, Filippo thus frankly summed up his estimate of the work: "It is not Christ, but a peasant which thou hast crucified." "If it were as easy to do as to judge," retorted the wounded Donato, "my Christ would appear to thee to be a Christ, and not a peasant. Do thou take wood, and try to do one, even thou."

Some while afterwards, Filippo, meeting Donato in the Old Market, where the latter had been buying provisions for his breakfast, asked him to return home with him. Donato agreeing, they turned in company towards Filippo's lodging. Before arriving at the door, however, Filippo lingered, and, making some excuse, asked Donato to precede him. Unsuspecting any surprise, Donato opened the door, and saw, placed in the most advantageous light, another crucifix carved by Filippo. Such as it was, it may be seen to-day in the church of Santa Maria Novella. Donato, in a glance, recognised the excellence of the work. Forgetting that in his apron, which he was holding up by one hand, was all his marketing, the eggs, soft cheese, fruit, salad, he spread both arms out wide and stood transfixed, until he heard Filippo asking where the breakfast was: "O Filippo," he cried, turning round, "eat thou the breakfast, I have had my fill. To thee it is given to sculpture a Christ, I can only carve peasants!"

Comment on this story would be superfluous.

Throughout the early years of Donatello's career, a large part of the citizen interest of Florence was centred around the cathedral works, and those of the oratory of the Guilds, the church of Or San Michele. The fine group of buildings which now forms one of the most characteristic features of the city, was at that date but in the making. The Duomo stood without its dome and façade, the Campanile lacking its full complement of decoration, and the Baptistery had but one pair of bronze gates, those worked in the beginning of the preceding century by Andrea Pisano.

In 1400 the authorities invited skilled artists to compete for the commission to execute a second pair of bronze gates for the Baptistery. The story of how, with others, Filippo Brunellesco and Ghiberti entered the lists and worked out the trial panel is too well known to be repeated here.* We know that Ghiberti was the successful competitor. As he himself naïvely records: "The palm of victory was conceded to me by all the judges, and by those who competed with me. Universally the glory was given to me without any exception."

Brunellesco, though frankly acknowledging the superiority of his rival's panel, felt disappointed at the result of the competition, and, apparently as a direct consequence, left Florence and betook himself to Rome, whither, as is stated by most authorities, his boy friend Donatello accompanied him.

This statement is, however, absolutely rejected by M. Marcel Reymond, who contends that Donato's first journey to Rome was the one taken in 1433. If this

* See Vasari's Lives of Ghiberti and of Brunellesco.

be so, it becomes very difficult to account for much that we find in the master's work during the years 1406-16; while a closer touch with antiquity, such as a visit to Rome would have given, offers a key to those peculiar qualities. We accordingly give the story, feeling that the possibility of its truth is not to be altogether rejected from Donato's life.

It would be difficult to say what exactly of Antique Art would meet the eyes of the young artists on entering the Imperial City. Much there would be that has since been destroyed; much that we now have the privilege of seeing had not then been unearthed. But whatever there was or was not in detail, Rome was always Rome, even if in ruins, still the home of the ancient Empire, the idea of which held so large a place in the mediæval mind, second only to that of the Catholic Church. There, more than in any other place, would our artist's mind be roused to a pitch of exaltation. Vasari tells us how Donato and Brunellesco studied the Rome that they found. Everywhere they sought for what examples of Classic Art might be discovered, making sketches and notes of all their treasure trove. Literally "treasure-seekers" the Romans called them, as they saw the two day after day digging among the ruined mounds in the hope of finding some fragment of ancient art. Their money giving out, we are told that they returned to the craft of their early apprenticeship and worked as goldsmiths; only, however, so far as to earn bare necessaries, all the time that it was possible to give being devoted to their study of antiquity.

Whether we accept this story of Donato's companionship with Brunellesco or not, both men appear

during this period to have definitely determined along which line of art they were respectively best fitted to work. Ideas were in a condition of perpetual change and development, then as now; and these two among the first of their contemporaries realised that neither the one nor the other could become the encyclopedist in art that the elder masters had for the most part aimed at being. Thus Andrea Orcagna painted pictures, and signed himself upon them Orcagna Sculptor, while upon his sculptural monuments his name appears as Orcagna Painter. Giotto, the fresco painter *par excellence*, was also the designer of the Florentine Campanile.

Donatello and Brunellesco, however, at the opening of the fifteenth century, saw that for them the path of art must be more strait and narrow. The latter, perhaps still under the influence of his disappointment in connection with the Baptistery gates, turned from sculpture, and determined to devote himself to the development of architecture. Donato remained constant to the art to which he had first given himself; and he elected still to carve, until to him it should be given to sculpture not only an idea but an ideal.

Donato's choice drew him to the cathedral of his native city, and we find him from 1406 to be closely connected with the *Opera del Duomo* or the cathedral Board of Works. For this body, and the authorities of Or San Michele, during the next fifteen or sixteen years, he was busily engaged, producing a remarkable series of works—large statues in the round, the discussion of which, however, it is proposed to undertake in the second section of this work.

Around the as yet unfinished Duomo, and working under the direction of its *Opera*, was a group of skilful and eager craftsmen. Among these Donato took his place, and thus working, gradually developed his own proper style, and made for himself, as an artist, a unique position.

We must not however, as yet, picture him to ourselves as the great master standing apart from his fellows, but rather to all outward seeming but a capable and indefatigable craftsman, working day by day in apron and wooden shoes, going in and out among the others of his calling, entirely one with them, competing with them, criticised by them, always, however, ready to help a less fortunate comrade, with either hand or purse, naïvely pleased with his own successes, temperate and blameless in private life, a dutiful son and kind brother.

The stories and notices on record of this and succeeding periods of his long life are all too few; happily it is to the pen of Vasari that we owe most of the information that we possess. This prince of chroniclers knew, as few other writers have done, how, in a paragraph, or even a line, to make his characters stand out before his readers as living men. Thus through his pages, backed by some few notices in less picturesque documents, we may succeed in seeing Donatello in his outer man with something of distinctness.

We have already seen him in the story of the Crucifix of Santa Croce as a very simple citizen. Such indeed was his degree; his father was but a carder of wool by trade; and, owing to unlucky participation in civic politics, a far from wealthy man. In later years we find in a general declaration of property

hoto] [*Or San Michele, Florence*

ST. MARK

demanded by the city authorities that Donato's house was of the simplest, and that his household consisted of his aged mother, a widowed sister, and her son. Of love and romance we find no notice in the artist's life; an unbroken reticence with regard to that side of his nature is preserved, from which a weaver of story might draw conclusions, but for the biographer there is nothing to record.

In a certain document relating to the building of the Duomo, we find a quaint entry to the effect, "that it is awarded to Niccoló Piero di Lamberti, Donato di Niccolo Berti Bardi, and to Nanni d'Antonio (di Banco) to each a figure in marble, for the four evangelists, on condition that the fourth figure shall be executed by him who shall best have completed that here assigned to him."

Here we have Donato presented to us as a workman among his fellows. The above-mentioned Lamberti was a sculptor of old standing among the band of cathedral workers. His was the whimsical brain that conceived, and his the skilful hands which executed, the rich ornament surrounding the south door of the Duomo; he was reckoned an inspiring master by the rising artists of the time. Nanni di Banco appears to have been a younger man; some say he was a pupil of Donato's; be that as it may, the relations between them were cordial, as the following pleasant story given us by Vasari abundantly shows.

Nanni was an enthusiast in the art of sculpture, and occasionally achieved a marked success; to him we owe the beautiful relief of the Madonna in a *mandorla* which crowns the north door of the Duomo. He does not,

however, appear to have been always so happy as in this instance, nor, indeed, to have been in any way a man of much resource in times of emergency. On the occasion of the story to be related, Nanni had undertaken to fill one of the great series of niches on the exterior of the oratory of Or San Michele. The Companies of the Bricklayers, Smiths, Carpenters, and Masons had given the commission, and the subject selected was the *Santi Quattro*. These were the patron saints of the great Masonic Guild of Italy. Nanni proceeded to sculpture his group; only when the work was almost completed did he discover that he had made some miscalculation as to the size and space, and that by no means which he could command might the *Santi Quattro* be accommodated in the niche for which they were intended. Almost in despair, he sought out Donatello, and, making his humiliating confession, asked his help. "Go you into the country for a day or two, and take some measurements which I require at Prato," said the rival sculptor, "and I and my assistants will see what we can do; only," added Donato, "we shall expect, if we succeed, a good supper from you for our pains." Nanni agreed, and leaving his reputation as a sculptor in Donato's hands, he went, as suggested, into the country. Donato's keen eye soon grasped the situation, and his wit devised a way out of the difficulty. A piece judiciously chiselled off here, a shoulder compressed there, with absolute comprehension of the necessities of the position which the statues were to hold, soon reduced their bulk, and made it possible to place them in the niche. And there they stand to this day, the *Santi Quattro* works of Nanni di

Banco, adding much to his reputation as a figure sculptor, and at the same time a monument to the resource and good fellowship of Donatello.

Again, in connection with the same Nanni di Banco we have another charming and most characteristic anecdote given to us by Vasari. It is as follows:—

"There is from his (Nanni's) hand in Florence a 'St. Philip' in marble on the exterior of the oratory of Or San Michele, which work was in the first instance allotted to Donato by the Guild of the Shoemakers, and then on account of their not being able to agree as to price, re-allotted to Nanni almost by way of slight to Donato. The former promised to take in payment whatever the Guild should decide to give him, but in the event did not do so, for, the work being finished and placed, he asked from the Council a greater price than the one, in the first instance, asked by Donato. On this, both parties referred the matter to Donato, the Consuls of the Guild believing assuredly that out of spite for not having had the work he would value it at less than if he had himself done it. But they were mistaken in this belief, for Donato judged that a much greater price should be paid to Nanni for the statue than the one he had asked. —To this judgment, no one of the Consuls was willing to stand, crying out upon Donato: 'Why hast thou, who wouldst have done the work for a less price, estimated it at so much more when from the hand of another, and press us to give him for it more than that which thou didst ask, the more so as it would have been better done if executed by thy hands.' Laughing, Donato replied: 'Truly this good man is not what I am in the Art, so for him the fatigue of labour is by so much the greater;

therefore you are obliged in order to satisfy him, and being honourable men as it appears to me, to pay him for the time which he has expended.' And such was the effect of the judgment of Donato that a compromise was effected which pleased both parties."

Of Donato's naïve satisfaction in his own work Vasari gives us in a line a vivid picture. He was commissioned to execute a statue for one of the niches of the Campanile, and chose for his model an old and singularly ugly man. His figure was ungainly, his head absolutely bald, and the features forbidding. All this was scrupulously reproduced in the statue; Donato made an unflinching and uncompromising study of his model. At last it stood completed, a living likeness; such as the model was, so had Donato made his copy, and with the same impetuousness with which he had in his boyhood hailed Brunellesco to come and see his crucifix, he now was heard to apostrophise his work, which seemed to him but to lack breath: "Speak, speak!" he cried. "Plague take thee, why dost thou not speak?" The statue was indeed a marvel of realism, and obtained the name, by which it is still known, of "Il Zuccone," the big pumpkin—reference thus being made to its baldness. Donato seemed to consider it in its own line one of his most satisfactory achievements, and was wont even to swear by its excellence. "By the faith which I have in my 'Zuccone'!" became his accustomed expression.

The fifteen years during which Donato was for the most part employed by the *Opera* of the Duomo and the authorities of Or San Michele gave him his opportunity for practice and discipline in that special line

Alinari photo] [*Campanile, Florence*

"IL ZUCCONE"

of his art which he had marked out for himself; his peculiar skill and manner now developed, and differentiated him from all others of his craft. We indicated above something of the spirit which was moving over Florence at this time, and of the changed ideals which were gradually resolving themselves one out of the other —ideals of thought and art. Donato's work came to have that in it which marked him as one who could think with, or even ahead of, his time, or as one who intuitively went behind the veil of tradition and found the heart of things, the secret this of all profound originality. Thus scholars as well as artists found his companionship sympathetic.

Towards the close of this period of fifteen years we find Brunellesco again in Florence, and Donato associated with him in undertakings curiously diverse in their nature. Filippo was commissioned by the noble family of the Pazzi to build a chapel in the cloisters of Santa Croce, and this Donato adorned, as is generally supposed, by the admirable frieze of cherubs' heads; the two artists were further employed by the city government to superintend some operations of military engineering directed against the city of Lucca.

Of the companionship of Donato with Brunellesco Vasari writes as follows: "He (Brunellesco) turned his attention to the Scriptures, and never failed to be present at the disputations and preaching of learned men . . . at the same time he gave earnest study to the works of Dante, nor indeed were his thoughts ever occupied otherwise than in the consideration of ingenious and difficult enquiries, but he could never find any one who gave him so much satisfaction as did Donato, with

whom he often held confidential discourse; these two artists found perpetual pleasure in the society of each other, and frequently conferred together on the difficulties of their art." The quality of this friendship, as here described, in all likelihood gives a key to much of what was peculiar to Donato's work. No scholar himself, yet living thus in the atmosphere of scholarship, he became attuned to the great thoughts prevalent at the time, and found himself to be in innate sympathy therewith. Speech to him apparently was not easy; he could, however, listen, and then in his turn express himself through his art.

In the year 1412 we learn that he was received as a member into the Painters' Guild of St. Luke, and presumably it was as such that, at a later period, he competed against Ghiberti in a design for a stained glass window to be placed in the Duomo. On this occasion the self-complacent Ghiberti was worsted, and Donato's window may to this day be seen under the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore. Six years later, in 1418, he also attained the rank of master (*magister*) in the Florentine Lodge of the great Italian Guild of Masons, and we learn from the archives of the Duomo that his studio became actually the school of the *Opera*, and was itself in the *Opera* building.

Though personally confining himself for the most part to the practice of sculpture, that art must always have been in his mind closely allied to architecture. Compelled by his peculiar genius to specialise, he retained the encyclopedist's ideal of the place of his art, and a large portion of his life's work was done in close association with some one architect or another.

In 1426 began a long and close connection with Michelozzo Michelozzi, the architect whom we have had occasion to mention above.

In our endeavour to picture Donatello to ourselves, and the artistic life of old Florence, which was his world, we must take pains to realise how at that time intellect and learning were in no sense a class monopoly. The artists, those whom we call the Old Masters, were the master-craftsmen of the day, it being theirs, however, to transmute their craft into art. We must conceive the "studio talk" of the time taking place as it were in the workmen's dinner-hour, under the rising walls of the Duomo, or in the *botteghe* situated near at hand. The "confidential discourse" between such as Donato and Brunellesco when they "conferred together on the difficulty of their art," discussed the pages of the "Divine Comedy," or of the newly discovered Plato, must have taken place at such times—the hours of the *siesta*, or the short twilight after the working day, both men alike in the "fustian" of the period, and neither dreaming himself to be socially either more or less than an honest citizen of Florence.

We have, on an earlier page, drawn attention to the fact that the new Humanistic influences were now beginning to touch and affect the nobles as well as the artists. Thus we find the House of the Martelli extending their patronage to Donato; indeed, Vasari declares that Roberto Martelli had had a special interest in even his earliest efforts, and had afforded him protection from his childhood.

The year 1426 is given as the date of Donato's first work executed in association with Michelozzo; and it

is only in harmony with the trend of events that the work in question was a commission from another noble house, that of the Medici.

It is not surprising that old Giovanni de' Medici, and particularly his alert son Cosimo, should be attracted by the peculiar virility and novel spirit of the young sculptor. In the case of the latter, the regard extended presumably from the art to the man, and ripened eventually into a life-long friendship.

The first Medici commission to Donato was a tomb for Pope John XXIII. This unhappy Pontiff ended his days in Florence, dis-crowned and humiliated; but the proud citizen who espoused his cause against his rival chose to honour his memory by a noble monument, and that in his city's very heart, no less a place than the Baptistery, Dante's "il mio bel San Giovanni." With this monument Michelozzo and Donato were associated, and thus may the latter be said to have entered upon the second period of his career.

Alinari photo] [*Baptistery, Florence*

TOMB OF POPE JOHN XXIII.

CHAPTER III

FROM 1426 TO 1444

THE tomb of Pope John XXIII. was one of a series which the two collaborators undertook. It is difficult to determine exactly and in detail how the labour was divided between the partners. M. Müntz hazards, and in all probability with justice, the following supposition: "Il (Donato) fut heureux de trouver un collaborateur qui consentît à prendre en main le compas et l'équerre, à mesurer et à calculer, à tracer des épures, en un mot à se charger de la partie architectonique de l'œuvre, le laissant libre, lui, de creuser les problemes de la vie et de faire palpiter le marbre."

Following this tomb of Pope John came a commission for another sepulchral monument, one in memory of Cardinal Brancacci, to be erected in the church of S. Angelo a Nilo in Naples. To facilitate the transport of the heavy marbles used in this work, the artists repaired to Pisa, and executed the monument there, and from that port it was finally shipped to Naples.

Donato's reputation spread, and we next find him working in Siena and later in Prato, in the latter town executing with Michelozzo the exquisite "Pulpito della Cintola."

In Siena he was principally employed in some details

for the font of the Baptistery, the design of the whole being by Jacopo della Quercia.

In connection with this work for the cathedral authorities of Siena is a most interesting document preserved in the *Archivio dell' Opera del Duomo di Siena.*

The transactions between Donato and the *Opera* or Board of Works seem to have been long drawn out, the entry being dated 1434. It is as follows:—

"Deliberations of the Master Builder and Council of the Board of Works of the Duomo of Siena on the question that Pagno di Lapo be paid a further sum due to Donatello for work executed by him for the Baptistery of San Giovanni. . . . On the 18th day of August 1434. Being assembled the aforesaid Master Builder and Council, absent only Andrea—
Whereas Pagno di Lapo assistant of Donato di Niccoló of Florence presented himself before them and on behalf of the said Donato demanded a settlement of certain questions of monies received by the said Donato from the said Board of Works, which settlement being reasonable, just and due, and whereas the said Donato has had in advance the sum of 738 lire and 11 soldi as appears from the Yellow Book of the said Board page 90, and whereas the said Donato has served the said Board and made certain figures in gilded bronze for the font of the church of San Giovanni, the said figures being more particularly described in the Treasurer's Books, for which figures there is due to him 720 lire, it was unanimously resolved that the Treasurer of the said Board be hereby authorised to credit the said Donato in the books of

Alinari photo] [*Baptistery, Siena*

FONT

the said Board wherein he is debited, with the aforesaid sum of 720 lire. And whereas, after credit being given to the said Donato for the above named sum, he still remains a debtor to the extent of 18 lire and 11 soldi, and considering that the said Donato made a small door (*sportello*) of gilded bronze for the aforesaid font which however was not of such fashion as to please the said Master Builder and Council, wishing to deal liberally with the said Donato so that he should not lose all the fruits of his labour, this appearing only reasonable and just, it was solemnly resolved that the said Treasurer be and hereby is authorised to give and to pay to the said Donato from the funds of the Board 38 lire and 11 soldi by the said Donato to the aforesaid Board as balance of the aforesaid sum. And the said small door, the said Bartolomejo Master Builder shall give and consign to the aforesaid Pagno di Lapo as agent for the aforesaid Donato, in presence of me Notary, and the other witnesses whose names are subscribed hereto. And the aforesaid matters were deliberated upon and determined by the Master Builder and Council aforesaid to the end that Tommaso di Paolo goldsmith of Siena shall in the place and the name of Donato solemnly ratify, adhere to and confirm all the matters herein written, and under the herein written penalty shall free liberate and absolve etc.

"And the aforesaid matters were resolved at the office of the Master Builder and Council and Treasurer, being present as witnesses Niccoló di Giovanni Ventura, Provision Dealer, and Paolo di Jacomo, both of Siena."

Another entry shows that the balance of 20 lire was

duly paid to Donato as compensation for the rejected *sportello.*

Thus does Paolo di Jacomo, notary, witness, and secretary, unwittingly give to posterity a picture which we would not willingly be without of civic dealings in old Siena, with Donato passing across the page as in actual life. The document, indeed, seems for the moment to put breath for us into the dead past. Donato, easy man, careless almost to a fault, is away who knows where, journeying possibly from Rome, or at work on a new undertaking in Prato; his affairs in Siena he confidently leaves first to his assistant, Pagno di Lapo, and for the rest to a goldsmith of the rival city. Both apparently prove themselves worthy, and we may imagine the master's genial appreciation of the humour of the situation when he heard of the solemn rejection of his *sportello.* To posterity the matter is more serious, as the *Opera's* conclusion robbed not only their church, but the whole world, for, unplaced in the font, the door has been lost, and no trace of it remains.

The journey to Rome referred to above was taken in 1433; this date is significant, being that of the exile of Cosimo de' Medici. Michelozzo, his partner in work, we know, as loyal follower, accompanied Cosimo to Venice; Masaccio also left Florence and went to Rome for this notable year while Cosimo was away; and to Rome, too, went Donatello. Here he left a few works behind him, a memorial slab carved in very low relief, according to the old Tuscan manner, this in the Aracoelli church; and a ciborium in St. Peter's. The principal result of this visit, however, seems to have

[*Museum, Berlin*

MADONNA AND CHILD

been that he became inspired with a fresh enthusiasm for antique art.

The return of Cosimo to Florence was the signal for that of Donato, and now, in all probability, began the period when he produced so many of his works for private patrons, notably for Cosimo, busts, reliefs, and single figures, works which to-day may in part be found in museums and collections, some far distant from Florence, some still in the city of their birth; but many, alas, are also lost, it is to be feared irrevocably.

The friendship of Cosimo for the sculptor must have ripened during these busy years. Of their mutual relations Vasari tells us: "Such was the love that Cosimo bore to the powers of Donato that he continually made him work; while, on the other hand, Donato had so much love for Cosimo that from his slightest sign he divined what the latter wished and continually obeyed him."

In the works commissioned by Cosimo and other private patrons, we see the manner in which the social changes of the time influenced art production. The smaller work of delicate finish suitable for the private gallery of the palace began to share the field with the larger monumental labours such as had before alone occupied the artists when employed only by great corporations, civic or ecclesiastical.

Donato's connection with Michelozzo ceased from about this time. The Pratese pulpit was the last work in which they collaborated. The architect, for the future, confined himself strictly to building, and Donato specialised still further in his particular art.

His earnest study of the life, and sympathy with the

antique made him a consummate portrait sculptor, and under his hand this branch of art revived.

At the desire of Cosimo, yet another description of work came frequently to be placed in his hands. The reverence for classic sculpture may be expressed in two fashions; the antiquarian spirit may be the directing force, or it may be the purely artistic instinct which determines the treatment. In the Florence of the Medici the latter ruled, as does the former with us at the present time. While scholars retained the manuscripts which were so earnestly sought for by the Humanists, examples of art were handed over to the artists in order to have their full beauty restored to them, if by mishap any part was lacking. The "Dancing Faun," preserved in the *Tribuna* of the Uffizi Gallery, is an excellent example of this method of treatment. The head is a restoration by Michel Angelo, and of such restoration it would be indeed ungracious to feel impatient. On the other hand, the additions made to the "Venus de' Medici," in the same gallery,—the mincing hands and inane head,—show the risks run by placing work of the ancients in any hands less than the greatest.

Cosimo, whose collection of ancient marbles grew apace, employed Donato as their restorer. A "Marsyas," at present in the Uffizi, is said to have thus passed through his hands. In short, we gather that Donato became the great practical authority in Florence on matters relating to classic art, and his workshop was the *rendezvous* for all those alert spirits who at that time were by their untold efforts bringing back to Europe, under the name of the New Learning, the

Alinari photo] [*Museo Nazionale, Florence*

DAVID
(*Bronze*)

Alinari photo] [*Museo Nazionale, Florence*

CUPID

Wisdom of the Ancients. Of these, Niccolo di Niccoli was his intimate friend, while Poggio Bracciolini, Gianozzo Manetti, and Leonardo Bruni may be safely assumed to have been acquaintances, if not more.

Of his work, under the direct inspiration of classicism, are the two bronze statues now preserved in the Bargello: the one a "David," a commission from Cosimo; the other the fantastic little "Cupid," of such unique quality and charm. These, revivals of the study of the nude, in their admirable success, must have roused the artistic world of Florence to an absolute *furore* of admiration.

The large medallions of classic subjects which adorn the court of the Medici, now Riccardi Palace, were also sculptured by Donato, enlarged copies of antique gems. In addition to these the marble singing gallery for the Duomo belongs to this period. Two such galleries were demanded by the *Opera*, Luca della Robbia having the commission for the first. Much is it to be deplored that neither is in its proper place at the present time, being re-erected in the most inadequate space which is afforded by the upper room of the *Museo del Duomo.*

The ten years which succeeded Donato's return to Florence from Rome, we may presume were those on which he would look back as the most entirely prosperous and happy of all his life. Two other anecdotes recorded of him in all probability find their place in these years. Both show the intimacy of his relations with Cosimo; and each throws a vivid side-light on different aspects of the master's character.

Through all Donatello's career he preserved the simplicity of manner and condition which we noted

was his at the outset. Even in the matter of clothes he apparently maintained a somewhat austere self-restraint. This austerity seems not to have entirely commended itself to Cosimo, the great citizen of the new order—the courtly dweller in the new palace of the Via Larga. Taking the occasion of a *festa*, he sent to his sculptor friend the present of an entirely new suit of clothes, such as he thought more fitting to a man of Donato's worth and standing. A rose-coloured mantle and hood, we are told, formed part of the costume, and all the rest was "entirely new," the chronicle adds. Donatello put on the brave clothing once or twice, and then laid it to one side, unable to prevail upon himself to continue wearing it—"because," said he, "it appeared to him to be delicate." Here it would seem we may recognise an outcome of the New Learning,—the *quatrocento* Platonist enamoured of the antique virtue of Temperance.

The second anecdote alluded to we owe to Vasari. Cosimo introduced a certain Genoese merchant to Donato, presumably for their mutual advantage. There immediately ensued a commission to the artist to execute for the merchant a bust in bronze. This in due course was done, "*quanto il vivo, bellissima*," and cast with unusual delicacy in order to facilitate its carriage to a distance. On its delivery, the merchant, true to the commercial tradition of his nation, proceeded to haggle with Donato respecting the price, and finally referred the matter to Cosimo. This latter, merchant too, entered at once into the game, and caused the bust to be carried to a *loggia* overlooking the street in order that he might see it better. There he sug-

gested that the price submitted by the merchant was somewhat small. The latter replied that the bust had taken less than a month to do, and the price asked amounted to more than half-a-florin a day. But here Donato broke in to the pleasant little professional passage between the merchants. His art to him was no merchandise to be chaffered over as such. Tripping up the man of Genoa on his smart little point of so much per day, he cried: "In the hundredth part of an hour it is possible to ruin the toil and the worth of a whole year." And with a blow the bust so "sottilissima" was cast into the street, where it lay ruined "and in many pieces." "Well do you show how you are used to traffic in beans, but not in statues," he added. The horror-stricken merchant hastened to offer him double his own price if he would but remake the bust, and Cosimo joined his entreaties to those of the luckless Genoese, but Donato would not consent, "*non volle rifarla giammai.*"

Isolated statues, busts, and reliefs for private patrons were not the limit of Donato's labours during these ten prosperous years. Once again we find him associated with an architect in the execution of a work of some magnitude. This was the sacristy of the church of San Lorenzo. Brunellesco, the architect of the church, also designed the sacristy, and it was on the interior decoration of this building that Donato was employed, thus working alongside of his friend. The greater part of this decoration was in stucco, but two pairs of doors opening into small additional chambers were cast in bronze. A tradition connected with these doors relates that over them the two life-long friends fell out. In

all the rest of the work Donato had, as was just, subordinated his design to the architectural scheme of Brunellesco; but in the frames of the doors he adhered to a plan of his own, which was considered not in strict harmony with the rest of the building. If this be so, the doors have a double interest, as we shall see later in our more critical examination of the master's various works.

CHAPTER IV

FROM 1444 TO 1466

THE year 1444 saw the close of this second Florentine period. The fame of the master had spread yet further, and in that year he accepted an invitation to Padua to undertake the decoration of the high altar in the church of San Antonio; and this led to the further commission for an equestrian monument in bronze to a noted condottiere, by name Gattamelata, who had died the preceding year.

Thus the classic impulse was to carry Donato ahead of all contemporary artists. The bronze equestrian statue was a thing which, up to his time, had not been attempted since the days of antiquity. It was now "given to him" to revive this ancient and noble form of monument. In so doing, two problems, other than those purely artistic, lay before him for solution, and to himself alone had he to turn for help. In the first place equine anatomy must be mastered, and, in addition to that, the process of casting necessary for so large a work, absolutely in the round, must be discovered.

Begun in 1446, this great labour was set up in 1453, with what success the whole world knows. There are two equestrian monuments of the Renaissance period, supreme works of art; the one is Donatello's "Gatta-

melata," in Padua, the other the "Colleone" statue in Venice, by Verrocchio, the follower of Donatello.

Great as the achievement of this statue was in itself, and important as a landmark in the development of modern art, it was rivalled in excellence of art and workmanship by the high altar in the church of San Antonio. The first two years of Donato's stay in Padua were presumably devoted entirely to this monument, and throughout the rest of his sojourn it doubtless engaged a very great share of his thought and energy, as, when completed, it must have formed one of the most magnificent altars of its kind in Christendom.

The revival of art in Padua had not progressed so far, at this date, as in Florence; hence Donato was not only unrivalled among the craftsmen of the city, but he appeared to them almost superhuman in his mastery and genius. Vasari tells us that his works were held to be miracles, and so much were they praised that finally the master resolved characteristically to return to Florence. "If I stayed here any longer," he naïvely remarked, "I should forget all I have ever known, through being so much praised. So willingly do I return home, where I get censured continually; such censure gives occasion for study, and brings as a consequence greater glory."

So again we find him on his travels. In 1451 he is in Venice, and executes for the Florentine chapel in the church of the Frari a statue in wood of St. John the Baptist. In Faenza are two works generally attributed to him while on this journey. In 1457 he casts in bronze a second statue of St. John Baptist for Siena; and so finally he finds his way home, and we again hear

Alinari photo] [*Padua*

GATTAMELATA MONUMENT

of him at work for the House of Medici. For their House he executed the last of the long series of works with which he enriched the world. These were the two bronze pulpits for the church of San Lorenzo. Here the skilful hand began to falter, and it is said that, through failing strength, he was unable to carry the work through entirely himself. Bertolo, one of his *garzoni*, seems to have devoted himself with loyal affection to his ageing master. The pulpits were completed by him, and many other designs left unfinished by Donatello, Bartolo faithfully executed according to his ability.

The friendship of Cosimo for the artist ceased only with the death of the former, and he left strong injunctions with his son Piero to watch over the remaining years of Donato's life, a command Piero faithfully obeyed.

The artist through life had been generous to a fault. It is even said that at one time he placed his earnings in a basket hung from the rafters of the *bottega*, and bade friends and *garzoni* consider them common property. Small wonder that, on old age overtaking him, he had but little wealth laid by. In order to supplement this little, Vasari tells us that Piero de' Medici settled upon him a small farm in the country, to which Donato retired, full of a child-like pleasure in his new possession, entirely characteristic of him. But within the year he was again in Florence, and, seeking out Piero, he besought him to take back his gift: "He lost time even to think," so he declared, "with so many cares upon his mind; the cattle died, the tempest struck the vines, and his servant complained; rather would

he die of hunger than have such satiety and wealth, and with it such fatigue." Piero, laughing, at once relieved him of his burdensome property, substituting a small but sufficient pension, which he directed, with kindly thought, to be paid weekly to the artist. So Donato made his final lodging in Florence, in a little house which he had in the Via del Cocomero, on the northern side of the great Duomo, over which his friend Filippo's dome was at length raised in its lines of strength and beauty.

The circumstances of his closing years were sad, but his courage seems never to have failed him. Comparable only to the deafness of Beethoven was the fate of Donatello. He was struck with paralysis, and, bedridden, lay with the skilful hands entirely useless. His old pupils and *garzoni* appear to have been his chief comfort, for near relations he had none remaining. Vasari tells how some connections, hearing that his end was near, reminded him of their existence, and begged him to leave them a small property which he possessed near Prato. "I cannot content you, relations mine," he answered them, "because I wish, as indeed appears to me to be reasonable, to leave it to the peasant who has laboured so long upon it; and not to you who have never done anything in connection with it, and indeed wish for it as some recompense for your visit to me. Go, I give you my blessing."

On the 13th of December 1486 he closed his eyes for ever on that old world of Florence which he had done so much to make glorious. He was buried fittingly in San Lorenzo, near to the tomb of the great Cosimo. All the artists, painters, sculptors, archi-

tects, and goldsmiths followed the bier, the Florence of that day fully appreciating the greatness of her son.

The epigram with which old Giorgio Vasari ends his all too short appreciation of the great master seems the most fitting close that could be made to any notice of his life: "O lo spirito di Donato opera nel Buonarroto, o quello del Buonarroto anticipò di operare in Donato"—"Either the spirit of Donatello wrought again in Buonarotti, or the genius of Buonarotti had pre-existence in Donatello."

PART II.—THE MASTER'S WORKS

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST FLORENTINE PERIOD

IN the first part of our work we have viewed Donatello from the outside, as citizen and craftsman, taking his part as such among his fellow-men. There remains for us now to make a more intimate examination of the man by way of his works, which, to judge justly, we must look upon as so many thoughts of his brain and aspirations of his nature reduced to concrete form. Among the noble army of artists, few, probably, have been so absolutely sincere in their work as Donatello. The temptation to follow the convention of the time, because it was the expected thing, or because it looked the correct thing, seems never to have assailed him. His idea once clear in his own mind, he pressed forward to that mark unflinchingly, so that his works reflect, as it were, the very heart of the man.

Hence the plan proposed in this section of our work is to go over the master's life a second time, not touching more than incidentally on the outer events which it comprised, but making his works, considered one by one, or group by group, as the case may seem to demand, the chain by which our examination is linked.

First of these we take the Santa Croce crucifix, an

early, though probably not, as often stated, actually his earliest sculptural work. In this we may see, with the keen-eyed Filippo, his strenuous effort after realism, the subject being a human form nailed to a cross, the youthful sculptor studied to the best of his powers the human figure placed in that position.

The difficulties of figure sculpture are great; to wrest the form of man or woman out of the shapeless block is labour of the severest; and yet a great work of art demands more than even the most faithful reproduction of form. That form must be so reproduced that an idea is presented or an ideal created, and the more living, the more correct the form, the more power will it possess of speaking to the intellect and the imagination. The art of the statuary contemporary with Donato's crucifix was not in itself very eloquent. Proportions were uncertain, draperies conventional, poses rigid,—sometimes one saw, as it were, an attempt to reproduce a classic character, but generally such resulted in a crude adoption of some superficial mannerism of drapery or detail; that which was behind giving the soul to classic sculpture was not recognised, and much less reproduced. In studying Donato's crucifix, one is led to conclude that already had come to him the realisation that accurate representation of form was the first essential in his art; indeed, it seems possible that, to his boyish mind, truth to the life may have appeared the goal of sculpture. If so, how salutary must have been Filippo's terse criticism. He had so far mastered form as to have carved a man; he had sculptured a peasant, but a peasant is not a Christ. The further step in art,

that form must not only imitate but also suggest, he realised on seeing Brunellesco's more ideal effort, and frankly acknowledged that he had made his discovery: "To thee it is given to sculpture a Christ; I can only carve peasants!"

The question of the journey to Rome in 1403 may be left undecided; but, whether by such a sojourn and prolonged companionship with Brunellesco, or by other means, it seems indisputable that he became increasingly touched by the new spirit which was in effect one with that of the older art. In work after work of his early years we see the bonds of the Masonic Guild traditions loosening, and the new ideal growing up before him.

Belonging to about the year 1406 we have an interesting example of work still in its place over one of the north doors of the Florentine Duomo. This is a single male figure, still conventional, still stiff, and yet there is a stirring within it of the new breath of life. The proportions are truer, and though some of the drapery meanders down the front in folds almost as those of an archaic Athene, in certain other parts there is a movement which betrays the first beginnings of what later becomes one of his most marked characteristics—to wit, his peculiar treatment of drapery.

Within the next ten years follows a remarkable series of statues, in the round, and of heroic size; these manifest the development of his idea as an artist, and his gradual increase of mastery in his art, until, with the "St. George," executed in 1416, a climax is reached which would have completed the reputation of any other man, and ranked him among the Great Masters.

This date, however, left Donatello but thirty years old, and just about to enter on an entirely new period of his career, that of his association with Michelozzo.

The series of statues which we have now to consider was as follows: The "St. Peter," on the exterior of Or San Michele; "St. Mark," in another niche on the same church; "St. John Baptist," on the Campanile; "Joshua," for the interior of the Duomo; the figure popularly called "Il Zuccone"; "Jeremiah"; "Habakkuk"; "Abraham and Isaac," these four for the exterior of the Campanile; a "St. John the Evangelist," a seated figure; a "David" as shepherd; and finally the "St. George," with its adjuncts, a low relief, representing the saint's combat with the dragon, and a "Dio Padre," also in low relief, surmounting the niche which encloses the statue.

The order given above is that accepted as chronological by most authorities, and may be taken as indicative of the course of the master's thought at the time; for though he would naturally be influenced in his work by the commissions offered to him, it is also probable that, to a young man of obvious genius, such work would be offered that it was felt he would be most inclined to execute. Thus, from this long series of twelve heroic statues undertaken by him, it may be fairly assumed that he desired the discipline and opportunity which this form of work afforded him; and that through them he considered that he could win the mastery to express that which he felt might be expressed by Sculpture, and which, up to his time, had not been achieved since the last artist of antiquity had laid down his chisel.

In order to estimate the full significance of this new

departure on the part of Donatello, we must bear in mind that for centuries previously the most generally adopted form of sculpture in Italy had been relief, while the manner of expression was very diffuse, and much by way of accepted symbols. Statues, when present, were introduced for the most part rather as accentuated points of ornament, and not as prime vehicles for conveying the artist's idea.

Thus we find in the Tabernacle of Or San Michele —a typical mediæval monument, in honour of the Madonna—that the Madonna sentiment is diffused through all its parts. Her story is detailed in a series of reliefs, her character suggested by a carefully thought-out arrangement of the accepted virtues appropriately placed between those stories which appear to illustrate them; symbols are freely employed; even the material and colours, the white marble, spangled with stones and enamels, appear to contribute their qualities to aid in the expression of those ideas which in the Catholic mind are associated with the person of the Blessed Virgin.

This was essentially the mediæval form of art, as it were a *benedicite omnia opera.* Nothing that had form or colour, or that could be endowed with an inner significance was left unutilised. It was felt that everything must be drawn in to give artistic expression to that particular order of thought which the plastic artist was then called upon to represent. The masonic masters were profoundly didactic, and their "mysteries" were in touch with the deepest contemporary thought, patristic and scholastic. No so-called "grotesque" was in fact a mere grotesque; all these forms were

symbolic; and to unravel the inner significations which are woven into the decoration of a great mediæval monument is to find a wealth of hidden lore of the profoundest import, judged from the standpoint of the artist who executed the work.

The genius of classic art was antipodal to the mediæval: where the latter was diffuse, the former was concentrated; where the one with faltering technique flew to symbols in order to express "the eternal things of the supernal glory," the other, choosing the most perfect form in nature,—the human,—so refined, so idealised it, and so transfused it with the spirit and the thought of its time, that it spoke by suggestion to all who had the ears to hear. If Orcagna's Tabernacle in honour of the Madonna may be taken as a typical mediæval masterpiece, perhaps as a classic parallel may be instanced the Venus de Milo.

And yet another point of contrast may be noted; it would seem that the older sculptors recognised a limit beyond which plastic art should not attempt to pass; the mediæval master, on the other hand, recognised no such limit, but attempted all, to do, in fact, in addition to his own proper task, that which it has been given to the modern musician alone to achieve —namely, to express the ineffable.

Donatello's predecessors were mediæval one and all; he himself was a scholar in the masonic schools; yet, twelve years before he is admitted as "Master" in his Guild, we see that he turns his back on the old fashion of relief, the mode of expression by story and symbol, and begins his series of heroic statues. In short, whether directly inspired by it or not, he chose

the way of antiquity, and recognised the apprenticeship necessary in order to follow this path. He realised with the older sculptors that it is out of absolute knowledge of what is in nature that the artist may pass beyond her, and so inform his work that by its own proper power, without help of symbol or of allegory, it may speak the ideal which is in its creator's mind. Thus we find him, in the strength of this new realisation or inspiration, setting himself to sculpture certain ideals, but giving himself the while the severest discipline possible. By way of the peasant he will attain to sculpturing a Christ.

In this series of statues we cannot but recognise two distinct groups, one purely disciplinary, and the other a striving after ideal expression. Among the first, speaking broadly, we may include the "St. Peter," "St. Mark," "Il Zuccone," "Jeremiah," "Habakkuk," "Abraham and Isaac," and "St. John the Evangelist"; the other group includes the "St. John the Baptist," the "Joshua," "David" as shepherd, and the "St. George."

In the first group we see, as one after another leaves his hand, the most ardent seeking to see things as they are, thus gaining the power to wring from them their essence, and represent their spirit. First is the "St. Peter," a marked advance on the prophet over the north door of the Duomo; though full of crudities, it is nevertheless as full of promise, which promise is not belied in the "St. Mark" which followed. "It would have been impossible to reject the Gospel from so straightforward a man as this"; thus Michel Angelo is reported to have criticised the "St. Mark";

Alinari photo] [*Campanile, Florence*

ST. JOHN BAPTIST

and in his words lies the implication that now in the second statue the young sculptor had succeeded in bringing life into his work. The hair is worked with due recognition of the natural growth of hair, the face has character, the pose is firm yet easy, and, above all, in this work is manifested his grasp of the nature of drapery. In few things is the Donatello touch more recognisable than in drapery; other artists studied the flow and the line of stuffs; no one perhaps composed his draperies more carefully than Ghiberti. Donatello, going beyond this consideration of line, studied the section of the folds. As a result, his drapery becomes, as it were, alive, it is not only an arrangement of lines for decorative effect, or a covering for the figure, but it is a beauty in itself filled with the living air. This sentiment of air within the folds Donatello always achieves, and we may perceive it in every work, statue, or relief which he executed subsequent to the "St. Mark" of Or San Michele.

Following the "St. Mark" is the "St. John the Baptist." This is a work on totally different lines; indeed, it would seem almost a retrograde step if one regards it as aiming at the same goal. The "St. Peter" and the "St. Mark" were earnest efforts to infuse life and reality into the traditional treatment of the statue; and beside these the "St. John the Baptist" appears at first sight particularly crude. Youth and health, it should be noted, however, are always more difficult to portray than age or sickness, and this "St. John" is represented as a youth just on the verge of manhood. Donato has succeeded in giving him a look of freshness and vigour, and, in addition, an air of serious resolution, but there is

no doubt that as a statue he is clumsy; he has not realised the thought of his creator, and remains full of promise rather than fulfilment.

The next statue, "Joshua" as Prophet, is another attempt on the part of Donato to work out his idea, and one begins, in him, to see what that idea may be. Donatello, breathing as, at this time, he must have done the atmosphere of Humanism, had conceived a human ideal, and this he set himself to express by the means of pure form. The "Joshua" is full of fine qualities, but by very reason of their presence, one feels how much further Donato had wished to go. This work, like the last, gives also a sense of promise rather than of fulfilment. It is said that Giannozzo Manetti, orator and humanist, stood as model for this work; in it there is an obvious striving after classic dignity, yet at the same time it has a vigour which is rather romantic in its character than classic—*e.g.* the exaggerated contrast between the standing and the resting leg. The drapery, on the contrary, is very restrained, every line being drawn most carefully in harmony with the whole, and a stiff scroll is added with obvious intent to complete the composition of line. Thus the figure is full of art and study, but the art is obvious, and has not arrived at that height where it conceals itself. The "Joshua" is a noble figure, but does not quite reach the goal. It is surely significant that immediately following on to the "Joshua" come four works which for the most part return, and even with greater severity, to the direct reproduction of the life. These are the "Habakkuk," the "Jeremiah," "Il Zuccone," and "Abraham and Isaac." Chief among these as the most successfully realistic is "Il Zuccone." Apart from

Alinari photo] [*Duomo, Florence*

JOSHUA

Alinari photo] [*Museo Nazionale, Florence*

DAVID
(*Marble*)

the figure, the study of the drapery is particularly severe, an absolute transcription into marble of actual folds, as careful and literal as any art-school student's work. In the "Abraham and Isaac" he relaxed somewhat from the severe student discipline of "Il Zuccone," and in the "Abraham" himself, we have a dramatic figure finely conceived. The beard of the Patriarch is treated in a manner which must have been very novel at the time; the bold modelling of the flowing hair is kept "pale" throughout to express the whiteness of age.

In 1415 we have another novel experiment, that of a seated figure in heroic size; thus he represented "St. John the Evangelist." In the dim light of the Tribune of the Duomo, where this figure is at present hidden, it is difficult to estimate its qualities justly. In any case, at the time of its execution it was an effort of great boldness. M. Müntz sees in it the direct precursor of Michel Angelo's "Moses": and certainly in order to appreciate it at its real value, it must not be considered by itself alone, but as a link in the chain of sculptural development.

Following this "St. John," possibly immediately, is "David," represented as the youthful shepherd, and destined for the Palazzo Vecchio. In this Donato seems to have sprung back to his old idea, to the expression of which the "Joshua" had not quite attained. Through "St. John Baptist," the patron saint of Florence, in his early youth, through the warrior "Joshua," in the first flush of manhood, had the attempt been made; "David" as the shepherd lad was now before him to express in form; and it would seem, fortified by the discipline of "Il Zuccone" and the other statues of that

class, Donatello endeavoured once more through this form to express his ideal. The exaggeration of pose in the "Joshua" we find chastened in the "David," the neck refined, the face softened. The wreath of leaves across the brow gives a classic touch to the young figure, which otherwise stands in most charming originality; no copy from the antique is he, still less has he anything of the earlier Italian tradition; this "David" is Donato's own. There is a fresh charm about him which it is difficult to express. He stands with all the suppleness of early youth in his pose, and an air of ingenuous pleasure in his victory over the fallen foe, that is yet full of a boyish modesty. The composition has great delicacy; there is no line that is not in harmony with the whole, yet there is no effect of a too obvious arrangement. Donato, on viewing his finished "David," must have felt that at last he had begun to inform his work with his very soul, and yet not to the full extent that his art allowed.

Thus, we find in the event, that immediately following the "David" came the "St. George." In the "St. George" he achieved his ideal, the presentation in plastic form of Heroic Youth, to which, as it appears, he had struggled through the various stages of the "St. John Baptist," the "Joshua," and the "David." These four make a group apart from those studies in realism headed by the "Zuccone." It is impossible not to class them separately and see in them a different train of thought, a different aim, as different as was the goal. "Il Zuccone" and "Il San Giorgio!"—these are worlds apart. This ideal, which found in "St. George" its visible type, was one familiar to the mediæval mind.

Dante expresses it in the "Divine Comedy" as manhood "crowned and mitred" both "king and bishop" of itself —literally, the flesh under the dominion of the spirit. Donato's heroic youth was but this conception embodied. Thus we have demonstrated to us his intellectual attitude with regard to classic art at this time. The superiority of the ancient method of expression he recognised, and succeeded in making it his own; but his ideals were those of his own century.

Technically the statue of "St. George" is a supreme triumph, one of the few Renaissance figures which may rank in mastery and beauty with Hellenic work. In its own particular style it may be deemed an absolute success; exaggeration is entirely absent. The "David," notwithstanding all its charm, might be thought by some to have a touch of weakness in its easy lines; the "St. George" is all restraint and strength. The nature of the pose is that of all others the most difficult to achieve, a pose of rest. We see that accomplished in the "Diadumenus" of Polycleitus, and in certain of the works of Michel Angelo; it is supremely effected in Donatello's "St. George." He stands absolutely at ease, perfectly at rest, and yet, to quote Vasari, with a "marvellous gesture of moving himself within the stone."

The physical type of the "St. George" is a creation of Donatello's own, and, with perhaps the exception of Michel Angelo in one instance, no succeeding Italian artist has tried to imitate it; in fact, once attained, he himself almost laid it to one side; no other heroic youth came from his chisel on just the lines of the "St. George"; the series ends with him. Yet, on certain

occasions, he seems to recall the idea in part. The terra-cotta bust of "San Lorenzo," in the sacristy of the church of San Lorenzo, breathes the serene dignity and calm fortitude of the San Giorgio; and the "St. Louis of Toulouse" also has an air which only the hand which sculptured the "St. George" could give.

The subject was made complete by a small relief inserted beneath the statue in illustration of the story. It represents the combat of the saint with the dragon, and the princess Sabra standing by. This is a jewel of workmanship, and also remarkable as one of the few instances in which the master treated a woman's figure sympathetically; it proves his capacity to express softness and grace, when such was his desire. A "Dio Padre," also in low relief, and placed over the statue, brings to an end the work of this marvellous year. No wonder that there appears a lull in his labours, and that for some years he seems to have undertaken no great work of first importance.

Two works, however, judging from their style, may belong to this period, though there is no direct evidence to prove the point. These are the statue called "A Prophet," in the interior of the Duomo; and the other is the well-known terra-cotta bust of "Niccoló da Uzzano," an important Florentine citizen. It has been said that "The Prophet" is a portrait of Poggio Bracciolini, the eminent humanist scholar, in which case the date of its execution is probably somewhat later. However that may be, as a work, "The Prophet" belongs to the mood of this period; that mood of earnest study of the truths of human form and expression. The strong form of the head

Alinari photo] [*Duomo, Florence*

PROPHET

is splendidly rendered, the dignified composition of the drapery and quiet pose of the figure are no less excellent; indeed, as a work of art, it transcends "Il Zuccone."

The year 1423 gives us two other statues, both in bronze, and both representing "St. John the Baptist." One of these was executed for the Duomo of Orvieto, and is now in Berlin; the other, for the Duomo of Siena, is happily still in the position for which it was designed.

CHAPTER VI

WITH MICHELOZZO, AND AT SIENA

AT the entrance of the third decade of his life, Donato stepped into the second period of his artistic career, that of his association with Michelozzo.

The works thus done in association were principally a series of tombs—those of Pope John XXIII., and of the Cardinal Brancacci aforesaid, and also, according to some authorities, that of the poet Bartolommeo of Aragazzi. In addition to, and following these, was the "Pulpito della Cintola" for the Duomo of Prato. At the same time Donato himself was employed by the *Opera* of Siena to execute a number of smaller works in bronze, among them the *sportello* rejected by it in the solemn deliberations which we noted at length on a preceding page.

The interest of this second period is naturally of a somewhat different nature from that of the first. It is not altogether so personal, for, in the associated works, the two men laboured side by side, in an apparently ideal partnership; thus it is not always possible to determine absolutely which portions of these works belong entirely to Donato and which to Michelozzo. We are driven to general conclusions, such as those of M. Müntz, quoted above. It is indeed probable that Donato undertook the pure sculpture of these monu-

ments, yet that he did not always execute the whole is clear. Much of the sculpture on the Aragazzi tomb in Montepulciano seems quite devoid of his characteristic touch, and is by some supposed to be entirely the work of Michelozzo; this is in fact the opinion of M. Müntz; while, on the other hand, Signor Milanese considers it probably the master's entirely, and his greatest work. Again, Vasari attributes the "Faith" in the tomb of Pope John to Michelozzo. Donato, in his turn, we must remember, was a *Magister* of the Masonic Guild, and therefore a professed architect. Hence it seems reasonable to infer that the influence of both artists was brought to bear on all parts of the monuments which they worked together, though the actual execution of the architecture was mostly in the hands of the one, and that of the sculpture in those of the other.

The first of these co-operative works was, as already stated, the tomb of Pope John XXIII. in the Florentine Baptistery. This is a monument of singular beauty, and, further, of great historical importance. It marks a new departure in the character of Tuscan monumental sculpture. Arnolfo del Cambio's tomb for the Cardinal de Braye in Orvieto, had been the great model for Tuscan artists since 1292. The tomb of Pope John is developed out of this older Pisan form, but transfused with the life of the early Renaissance. It is, as were the Pisan tombs, a mural monument, but is sculptured in a rich-toned marble, without any addition of mosaic in stone or enamel. The effigy of the Pope is in bronze, and except some indications of embroidery, in gilt, on the curtain suspended over the topmost member of the composition, no effects of colour are attempted. The

figure of the dethroned Pope we may assume to be entirely Donato's work. He lies, full of dignity, with the head turned to face the spectator, the expression being that of rest after a troubled and disappointed life. It is entirely grave and monumental, and yet Donato has known how to infuse into it a dramatic interest. Old Pope John XXIII., lying on his tomb, has his luckless history written on his face, yet with an art so consummate that the strictest sculptural severity is preserved.

The tomb of Cardinal Brancacci followed. This is a much more elaborate work architecturally than the preceding monument, and is enriched by seven full-length figures, and four half-length, not including the recumbent effigy of the dead Cardinal. As in the tomb of Pope John XXIII. the architectural and sculptural elements are fused with a rare skill and art; the whole forms a most noble work, and a definite step in the development of style from the older forms into the new. For our present purpose, the appreciation of Donatello alone, there is one feature in the monument of peculiar interest—a small panel in relief, which forms the centre of the front of the sarcophagus. It represents the Virgin enthroned in the heavens, while around her is a mist of baby angelic forms rising from, and melting back into the marble, which is made to appear as it were clouds encircling the Queen of Heaven. The whole is worked in the lowest relief, that degree known as *stiacciato*, which is so often associated with the name of Donatello.

The experiment of obtaining an atmospheric effect in marble is repeated by Donato in only one other

Alinari photo] [*S. Angelo a Nilo, Naples*

TOMB OF BRANCACCI

instance, the panel representing Christ giving the keys to Peter, preserved in the South Kensington Museum. These two panels being so very similar in style, we may assume that they belong to the same period. Both are universally accepted as genuine, and, from the peculiarly marked character of their workmanship are guides of extreme value to the critic who undertakes to settle those difficult questions of attribution which beset the study of this great master. While there is generally sufficient proof of the authenticity of the monumental works attributed to him, and few of these have been lost to us, havoc has been played by time and carelessness among his smaller works, notably his reliefs. Many of these are indubitably lost; and there have been perhaps as many falsely attributed to him; among these is a number which the more discriminating criticism of to-day ascribes to Desiderio da Settignano. Desiderio, following after Donato, greatly affected *stiacciato* relief; a careful comparison, however, of one such genuine work of his with the two above-mentioned genuine Donatellos will disclose a radical difference between the two sculptors in the manner of treating such relief. In Desiderio, we have layer under layer most delicately but obviously *cut*, with straight edges apparent, such as we see in the principal outlines of Donato's reliefs on a large scale. In these smaller works of his we have plane under plane, as delicately preserved as those of Desiderio, but, as it were, *inflated*, not cut. That sense of air and recognition of section which we noted above in his treatment of drapery, appear in his relief, and are entirely characteristic of his manner.

To return for the moment to the question of atmospheric effect produced in marble, it is interesting to note that just at the time of the execution of the Brancacci tomb, Ghiberti was engaged on the second pair of gates for the Baptistery. The first panel of these depicts the Creation, and is a marvel of delicate execution and aerial perspective. It will be remembered that one of the features of this panel is also a trailing line of angels melting softly into the background, in a method which Ghiberti made peculiarly his own. If we may assume that the panel which comes first in order on the gates is the one first done, it becomes interesting to note that the two greatest masters of the early Renaissance together * experimented on the same problem, that of translating atmospheric effect into plastic form. Ghiberti, we know, was pleased with his experiment, and such effects became a part and parcel of his future artistic stock in trade. By Donatello, evidently, the problem was dismissed, the severity of pure sculpture appealing to him more strongly. Though from time to time he executed, in accordance with the fashion of the day, *storie* in relief, in none, at least of those still in existence, did he repeat the experiment of the panels on the Brancacci tomb and in S. Kensington. He introduces perspective, it is true, but for the most part sparingly and always by way of architectural forms and lines.

One such *storia* belongs to about this date, and forms a panel of the font in the Baptistery of Siena. The group of works for the *Opera* of Siena was executed

* Mr. Robinson is of opinion that the "Coronation" panel is of later date than the tomb, but the reasons given for his opinion do not appear to the present writer to be very conclusive.

Alinari photo] [*Baptistery, Siena*

HEROD'S FEAST

Alinari photo] [*Florentine Baptistery*

THE CREATION
(*By Ghiberti*)

during the years 1426-28; thus one may conclude that, while labouring at Pisa on the Brancacci tomb, Donato went backwards and forwards between that city and Siena.

These works for Siena may, for the sake of convenience, be noticed all together at this point; they include the *storia* representing the Baptist's head brought in a charger to Herod; a bronze memorial relief to Bishop Picci, in a chapel of the Duomo; two bronze statuettes representing Faith and Hope, placed at two corners of the great font of the Baptistery; and three bronze *putti*, also for the font, at corners on an upper member of it. This is a curiously representative group of work, comprising ordinary relief in the *storia*; *stiacciato* in the tomb; draped figure sculpture in the Virtues; and the nude in the three *putti*.

The *storia* claims our attention first. Ghiberti was the composer *par excellence* of *storie* in bronze; he passed his long life in doing hardly any other form of work. He made a style all his own, as unmistakable in its mannerisms and delicate grace as was that of Perugino. A Ghiberti panel would be unmistakable among a thousand others. Composition of line and aerial perspective were the two leading characteristics of his method. A panel of his, representing the baptism of Christ by John, is in the Sienese font. The contrast to this, which we find in Donatello's *storia*, is as marked as it is interesting. Donato is no less removed from the traditional symbolic relief than was Ghiberti, but his manner was equally original; composition is secured rather by grouping and massing, than by sweeping lines; but obviously his first concern has been his

subject. With the concentrated energy of true sculpture he has set himself to present the spirit of his story. As regards the technique of his composition, he has allowed himself three planes, marked by receding architectural lines; dramatically, each plane serves as a distinct and separate emphasis to the master's idea—that of absolute horror at the unkingly deed. The whole is drawn with the utmost restraint; there is not one irrelevant detail; all that is there is needed in order to convey the idea; and, in effect, the *storia* thrills with a righteous indignation. On the furthest and lowest plane, we have an unwilling servant bearing almost at arm's-length the charger with its ghastly burden, while three profiles of men, on the same plane, express eloquently both reprobation and disgust. On the next plane, a musician unmusically grinds on his viol the dance music that he is for the moment loathing; while two attendants look scorn on his slave's obedience. In the front we have the principals; to the left, Herod at the head of his table, at the foot Salome; her dancing step is just checked, and she looks intently before her, while the group behind her leans eagerly forward; for kneeling by the king is a soldier bearing the charger; every line of his form is eloquent: "Only as a soldier I obey," he seems to say, "as a man, I scorn." Herod in his turn is conscience-stricken, now that he sees the deed accomplished. One of his guests covers his face; another addresses some word of condemnation to his host; while two little children shrink back into a corner, with fear and horror quivering, as it were, down their little supple limbs.

Surely never was the spirit of a story more impres-

sively and unflinchingly given, or was artist more absolutely sincere with himself in the telling of it. Here are no Ghiberti-like elegances of line, any more than there are old Guild archaisms; Donatello is absolutely himself; as he himself feels his story, so he depicts it. Perhaps only in Duccio, who also laboured for Siena, does one meet with a similar frank revelation of the man in his work. With Donato, as with Duccio, one is made to feel, after careful study, that, despite the intervening centuries, his spirit is made known to us, and that his works have given him, in a sense not quite the ordinary, a veritable immortality.

We cannot but begin to recognise about this time, how the personality of St. John the Baptist seized upon the imagination of Donato, so that he became to the artist as it were an undying hero. As occasion arose, he represented him, again and again, in all phases of his career, and always with a marvellous sympathy and reverence. In the bronze figure for the cathedral of Orvieto we see Donato's first conception, that of the inspired ascetic; a quarter of a century later, in the "St. John" of the church of the Frari, we shall see the same conception again, but perfected, and one of the most triumphant examples of Donato's peculiar power. Other representations of the Prophet we shall note in order when we reach the period to which presumably they belong. Considering their number, it would seem indeed that St. John became the ideal specially cherished in the sculptor's mind throughout the later half of his life, thus taking the place of his earlier ideal, that of Heroic Youth.

But to return to the group of works for the *Opera*

of Siena. The memorial slab of Bishop Picci has an interest of its own, differing from that of the *storia.* Such slabs, more often carved in marble, are common throughout Tuscany; thus the style followed by Donato was not original, he but developed a very ancient model. The tomb of young Lorenzo Acciajoli, in the Certosa di Val d' Ema near Florence, is an excellent and well preserved example of this Tuscan form of memorial. The grace of this youthful form, lying as it were asleep, with head turned slightly on the pillow, is exquisite, as is also the extreme delicacy of the carving. Absolute truth to the human figure is, however, sacrificed to decorative line, and the hands, though treated so as to be very decorative, are, as hands, impossible. Donato's Bishop Picci also lies as if sleeping, with his head turned upon the pillow; but decoration is here subordinated to truth; the difficulties of relief are absolutely mastered; figure, drapery, hands, features, all are true—soft in treatment, delicate in line, true in form they all are, and yet perfectly monumental in their restraint and dignity.

The "Faith" and "Hope," belonging to the font, are small figures, the latter, in particular, very expressive in pose. The *putti* are figures to rank with others of the same nature from his hand. The classic Cupid Donato revivified, and perhaps no one achieved more wonderful success than he in treating baby form decoratively.

In the year 1428 Donato, with Michelozzi, received the commission from Prato to design and work for the exterior of the Duomo a new pulpit for the exhibition of a celebrated relic, the girdle of the Madonna. The

Alinari photo] [*Duomo of Siena*

TOMB OF BISHOP PECCI

execution of this work was, however, deferred until 1433, and in the interval was undertaken the tomb of Aragazzi in Montepulciano, about which there exists such differences of opinion among the critics. This monument, if at all the work of Donatello, was his last of any magnitude belonging to this period; and we next hear of him in Rome during the exile of Cosimo de' Medici.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND FLORENTINE PERIOD

DONATELLO'S return to Florence, as already noted, was marked by a more direct classical form bestowed on much of his work. But, as before, we can trace more moods than one affecting his style, and, as it were, simultaneously.

We have his classic medallions for the Palazzo Medici, direct enlargements of antique gems; his restorations of ancient marbles and his bronze "David." This latter is very important as a landmark in art history, it being, as above noted, the first serious attempt of the Renaissance to master the difficulties of the wholly nude figure. With the "David," as belonging to the same mood, must be coupled the bronze "Cupid."

But, alongside of all these and other similar works, we have the Pratese "Pulpito della Cintola," the *Cantoria* for the Duomo in Florence, and the decoration of the old sacristy. These, though evincing familiarity with classic forms, are no less strongly original in essence; and there remain, beyond even these, three St. John Baptists absolutely and intensely Donato's own—as much his own as the "St. George," but with the experience of added years impressed upon them.

The first to be considered of all these labours is the "Pulpito della Cintola," apparently undertaken imme-

Alinari photo] [*Duomo, Prato*

PULPITO DELLA CINTOLA

diately on the return of the two artists, Donato and Michelozzo, the one from Rome, the other from Venice.

Considering the object for which this work was executed, its design is fraught with considerable interest, apart from its intrinsic beauty and masterly workmanship. As design, it is singularly happy and effective, but what must strike one very forcibly in connection with Donatello's special share of the work is, that his sculptured panels, which form the sides of the pulpit, have no connection in thought with either Madonna or *cintola*. The position of the pulpit is at the angle of the façade of the cathedral, around which it describes about two-thirds of a circle. The panels, seven in number, all contain groups of children, slightly draped, winged and dancing in exuberant and almost bacchanalian glee. Panel succeeding panel, the groups form a procession, as it were, leaving the Duomo at the side, and re-entering it at the front. In sentiment these *putti* appear to be entirely non-Christian, but in every action of their bodies expressive of a certain mood, that of the complete abandonment of joy proper to irresponsible childhood. The little creatures, as it were, thrill with life in their unceasing dance. The influence of antiquity would seem to have been very strong upon Donato, as he designed and executed his procession of children for the pulpit of Prato. A closer examination reveals, however, a something in the sentiment of these *bambini*, speaking of even more than general influences, but possibly indicative of the intimate thought of the master on matters of current interest.

The expression of the children's faces is very varying; at the beginning of the procession, those leaving the

church have beaming smiles, in complete harmony with the joyous movement of their bodies. As they circle round the pulpit this expression changes; the smile fixes itself upon the round child faces, and becomes almost a grimace. It is as if the little pagans, beginning with a dance of pure joy in mere existence, found it to become a weary task thus to continue forever dancing in honour of the *Santa Cintola* that for them was in no way sacred.

Can Donato's second visit to Rome have inspired him for the time being with a mood of revolt? Who may say with certainty? Surmise, however, is permissible, and cannot but be interesting. Apart from the sentiment of the sculptures of the pulpit, they mark a special development of style in Donato's work. M. Müntz declares that he recovered the child form from Antiquity, and gave it back to Art. His choice of this form for the decoration of the pulpit, and the general sentiment with which he infuses it, are doubtless direct results of his sympathy with antique art. Nevertheless, the *bambini* of Prato, in all their special characteristics, are Donato's own creation; his is their wild exuberance, not in any way imitated from the past. They may please us or not, according to our temperament, but the absolute mastery of their execution is indisputable. Their bodies are alive, and their draperies cling or float as they touch their wearers, or are caught up by the air.

The fashion of the relief, too, is peculiarly Donato's; it became one of his strong characteristics in works of any size, and, employed by him, has a marvellous effect. He brings the figures out to a certain pitch

Alinari photo] [*Museo del Duomo, Florence*

CANTORIA
(DETAIL)

of relief, cutting back to the foundation with an almost straight edge; then, on the surface of the relief, he models further detail with a delicacy almost of the degree called *stiacciato.* This method shows an exquisite fineness of workmanship, and, at the same time, the straight-edged outline secures a boldness necessary to work to be seen from a distance, giving, as it does, the opportunity to produce where needed emphatic and effective shadow. In the hands of Donato this method is admirable; it is, however, one that may be more or less mechanically imitated with comparative ease, and thus it may be seen in work of many of his followers. Without the informing spirit of the master behind it, however, the method becomes a mere trick, and even wearisome in its lifelessness.

In the *Cantoria* for the Duomo of Florence, Donato carries on the mood of the "Pulpito della Cintola." Yet, perhaps, if anything, the qualities of the pulpit are intensified in the gallery. We have the same baby forms, neither angel nor child, but an almost entirely abstract playing with Form and Life. The special qualities of Donato's work are perhaps more clearly discerned, when contrasted with the rival gallery by Luca della Robbia. This is full of Christian sentiment and human sympathy; it is more restrained in line—one may almost say more refined. There is, however, not Donato's absolute mastery over his material; the drapery is stony, even when in most exquisite line; the surfaces are almost too polished; the anatomy is not so carefully realised, particularly may this be noted in the knees. Luca's panels, in short, are pictures of

life; Donato's are life itself; and yet a life which he has created, he has not imitated.

The decoration of the Old Sacristy is most original in design, yet can hardly be called an entirely successful experiment. The scheme is that of a frieze decorated with *putti*; but these stand in complete relief against the background, supporting floral festoons, thus forming a connected line all round the chamber. It cannot but be felt that the effect is stiff and unhappy; the little wooden *putti*, for the most part, look wooden, and one wonders if, indeed, they are entirely by the master's hand, or executed, for the most part, by some imitative, but not inspired, *garzone*.

Up to this point, as far as possible, we have considered Donato's works in chronological order. There are, however, many undoubtedly from his hand, but to which no definite date can be assigned. Thus we read in Vasari that in the House of the Martelli were many *storie* in marble and bronze, and many other works by him, given in recognition of the kindness so constantly shown him by that family; in the Casa Medici, also, was a bust of Cosimo's wife, "and many other things of bronze and marble from the hand of Donato." Other private gentlemen are also named as possessing reliefs, or busts, or other works of his, some purely decorative. Many of these are lost; a few, however, happily remain, though, for the most part, dispersed among various galleries both in Italy and elsewhere. Vasari gives no clue to their exact date, but it seems very probable, judging from the style, that a considerable number of these isolated works belong to this period, the years

elapsing between the return of Cosimo and the residence of the master in Padua.

Three works, still in the Casa Martelli, are of special interest. These are an unfinished "David," in marble, a youthful "St. John the Baptist," and a bust of the "Baptist" represented at a still earlier age; both of these are also in marble.

The "David," one cannot but conclude, was designed under classic influence; it appears, indeed, to be a direct imitation of the antique, a most unwonted occurrence in work of Donatello. There is a distinct seeking after exterior beauty of form, as it were, for its own sake, and the figure has a grace and suavity which is absent even in the "St. George." The hair is bound with a fillet, which, with the regular profile, gives the young shepherd of Bethlehem a look of Hellas. It is, perhaps, significant that this graceful figure was left unfinished. Very different from the "David" is the young "St. John," in which we have a frank return of the master to his own proper style. It may be that he felt fortified by wider experience and opportunity for observation, and by additional years of practice and study; but, beyond this, he appears to have flung aside exterior influences and foreign suggestion, and to have communed but with his own soul as he set out once more to represent his hero. The figure is that of a youth about fourteen or fifteen years of age. He stands, looking forward, with parted lips, dressed in only his tunic of skin. The treatment is, on the surface, extremely realistic; none of the angularities of growing boyhood are in any degree softened, and the first impression created is but that of intense vitality. The

modelling is almost miraculous in its truth and mastery: the nude parts, hands, feet, knees, and neck are as life itself; and one feels the body, exquisitely turned in pose, as it were breathing under the skin tunic. The consummate art of Donatello is rarely more strikingly shown than in this figure; he has given all the outward truth, so that he may wrest from it the inward significations and the spiritual beauty of his conception. Through this realistic boy form, he makes visible his ideal, the hero-prophet as he conceived him while still a youth. The delicate inward beauty of the whole presentation grows on one by looking; in the parted lips is seen a breathless listening to the Divine Voice; and the realistically portrayed boy is recognised as, nevertheless, one inspired. Donatello has realised his hero to himself, and it was given to him so to transfuse his marble with his thought that we, too, are made to see the ideal.

The bust of a child, also a "St. John," is almost as beautiful in its way as the full-length figure. It represents the prophet at a still earlier age. The whole is kept, in sculptor's phrase, extremely "pale," with all the delicacy of youthful flesh perfectly rendered. The modelling of the almost baby neck is calculated to reduce any other sculptor to despair by its exquisite mastery of delicate form.

In connection with this bust should be noted two other child busts attributed to Donatello, and preserved in the church of San Francisco dei Vanchetoni in Florence. The one is the head of a boy about three or four years of age. It is a tiny bust of an attractive child, the delicacy of whose modelling has delighted the

Alinari photo] [*Church of the Vanchetoni, Florence*

BAMBINO GESÙ

Alinari photo] [*Church of the Vanchetoni, Florence*

ST. JOHN BAPTIST

Alinari photo] [*Museo Nazionale, Florence*

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

eye and tempted the hand of the sculptor. The name now given to it of "Gesù Bambino," seems somewhat arbitrary, there being nothing about the bust to indicate that it is anything more than a very careful study of a charming child.

The other bust, on the contrary, with its little skin tunic drawn up over its shoulder, is clearly marked as another representation of St. John. In pose it is somewhat pensive and exquisitely subtle; it represents a later age than the "Bambino Gesú," probably about ten or twelve years; and, whereas the later has merely the beauty of baby form, in the "St. John," to that of form, is added the beauty of intelligence. The two, in their own way, are masterpieces of sculpture. With reference to these and certain other busts of children attributed to Donatello, the critics vary much in their opinions. Some, notably M. Marcel Reymond, reject them one and all from the list of Donato's works, and attribute them to Desiderio or Rossellino. The problem is doubtless one of grave difficulty; at the same time the child bust in the Casa Martelli seems to offer a solution. It is hard to believe that the hand which sculptured the Martelli bust did not also sculpture, at any rate, the two busts of the church of the Vanchetoni. Certainly, no bust of child or adult at present in the Bargello, and ascribed to Desiderio or to Rossellino, can be compared in execution with the busts of the Vanchetoni. They have, it is true, a superficial resemblance, in that they have the same "pale" treatment in the matter of modelling; but, at all those crucial points where the master sculptor's hand most manifests itself, they fall absolutely short of the perfection of the Vanchetoni and Martelli busts.

In a "San Giovanino" by Rossellino, for example, the delicate modelling of throat and neck is almost lost, while the hair is merely scratched into the marble; and we know that in any and every work of Donato's dating from perhaps his "St. Mark," the hair is conspicuous by its appearance of living growth. Thus there seem to be strong grounds for retaining, at any rate, the above-mentioned three busts of children as genuine works of the master; and with these may be grouped the exquisite little relief in *pietra serena*, a "St. John," preserved in the Bargello.

There does not, however, appear to be the same grounds for accepting that other group of works, upon the genuineness of which many doubts have lately been cast. These are certain *stiacciato* reliefs, notably the "Madonna and Child," in the gallery of Turin, and the exquisite "St. Cecilia," in the collection of Lord Wemyss. That these are for the most part works of another hand, probably that of Desiderio, appears probable; and, as such, are omitted from the list of Donatello's works which is given at the end of the present volume.

To the period now under consideration also, in all probability, belongs the "Annunciation" of Santa Croce. The earlier opinion, that this exquisite monument was the outcome of the study during Donato's first visit to Rome in 1403, is now pretty generally rejected by authorities. The style of the architectural setting of the group is too completely of the early Renaissance for that date; and it is no merely tentative effort, but a masterly achievement. The same may be said of the two figures of the Madonna and the Angel; both have that "marvellous gesture of moving

Alinari photo] [*Santa Croce, Florence*

THE ANNUNCIATION

themselves within the stone" which belongs to the "St. George" and succeeding works, but was hardly attained earlier in the sculptor's career.

The "movement" of the Madonna is indeed "marvellous" in its complexity. She has risen from her seat, was moving away, is arrested, turns and listens. All this is indicated in the pose, which is nevertheless one of perfect grace. The Angel, having just touched the earth, with an exquisite lightness bends his knee, while the respective positions of the hands, and the slight backward tilt of the head, give a grace and expressiveness that is beyond praise.

The *putti* which decorate the entablature have also their own individual interest. It would seem that so overflowing with art energy was Donato, that it was impossible for him to treat the human figure as merely so much form to be used decoratively. Each of these *putti* is alive, and, while fulfilling its decorative function and duly subordinate to the design as a whole, yet each has a life of its own. Each is manifestly conscious of his elevated position on the cornice, and shows, according to his individual character, the effect it has on him, of wonder, or elation, or fear.

This "Annunciation" is of special interest; it is, as it were, a parenthesis in the long career of the master, and is in its general character unique. It is his only work of any magnitude in which a woman's form has a principal position; nor is there any other large work which aims at and achieves such a general suavity of style and sentiment. It is a beautiful representation of a lyrical scene, executed in a mood entirely in harmony with it. The general mood of the master,

as displayed in his other works, is, on the contrary, of a *terribilità* as great, or greater, than that of Michel Angelo.

In accordance with this more general mood, and taking us back in thought to the "St. John" of the Casa Martelli, is another representation of the "Forerunner," now in the Bargello. The figure is life-size, and again we have the uncompromisingly realistic treatment of the subject, and absolute rejection of all external suavity and grace. The prophet is in this case sculptured as a young man; his figure is lean, the hands large, the knees and shoulders are bony, just as would be those of a young ascetic sleeping in the wilderness, and feeding on "locusts" and "wild honey." But Donato sees in this unhandsome youth, his fearless prophet, and he succeeds finally in causing us to recognise him too. Gazing on a scroll which he holds in his left hand, while the reed cross is placed in his right, this young man steps, as it were, out from the wilderness, conning his message, wrapt up in his mission; and in some strange manner, through his very lack of mere outward beauty, one is made to feel his spiritual grandeur.

To this period further belong, in all probability, the few examples that remain of Donatello's purely decorative work. The "Marzocco," or heraldic lion of Florence, with its pedestal, both of *pietra serena*, is generally allowed to be his, as is also the marble fountain, now at the top of the fine new staircase given by King Umberto to the gallery of the Palazzo Pitti. This is the fountain which Vasari tells us was executed for the Casa Medici. In connection with it

Alinari photo] [*Museo Nazionale, Florence*

ST. JOHN BAPTIST

Alinari photo] [*Palazzo Pitti*

MARBLE FOUNTAIN

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may be mentioned the font in the Baptistery of Empoli, locally attributed to Donato. It is in the form of a huge vase, and, judging from its general character, it may well have come from his *bottega*; indeed, the *putti* which decorate the handles have a vivacity of pose which leads one to imagine that the finishing touches must have been given by his hand.

Among his purely decorative works are also certain coats-of-arms for noble Florentine families; of these, two are specially noted—that of the Martelli, and of the Gianfigliazzi.

The decoration of the sacristy of San Lorenzo occupied the years immediately preceding Donato's acceptance of the invitation to Padua.

The group of works comprised in this scheme of decoration is large and important. The principal are four medallions on the ceiling, representing the four Evangelists; four other compositions, also on the ceiling, these being stories from the lives of the evangelists; two large reliefs, each of two saints; two pairs of bronze doors; and the balustrade before the altar. To these structural decorations may be added, as probably belonging to the same period, the tomb of Giovanni de' Medici, the father of Cosimo. This tomb is a marble sarcophagus, of fine proportions; the sides and ends are decorated with *putti* carved in relief, and holding festoons. This work has a special historical value, as showing the complete adoption on the part of Donatello of classic forms.

In the other works above mentioned, the classic feeling is also very present, thus, as was just, harmonising with Brunellesco's architectural design. The

medallions of the four Evangelists are noble compositions; in each case the figure of the Evangelist is seated, with his gospel before him, held or supported by his accepted symbol; while resembling one another so far, a distinct character is, nevertheless, preserved to each. The figures are appropriately different, and infused with that vitality which is the sign manual of Donato's work. The beauty of the stories is much marred at the present time by the numberless coats of whitewash which, through the centuries, have been applied. Apparently much delicate work is thus lost to us; hence a just estimate of them is hardly possible.

Over the design of the frames of the bronze doors, we remember that it is said there occurred a difference of opinion between the two collaborators, Donatello adhering to some plan of his own in defiance of the architect Brunellesco. One cannot but query if such an unwonted event in the career of this most genial of artists determined in some degree the character of the doors themselves.

The decorative scheme of each door is simple, being a single row of square panels, with two figures in each panel. On the one pair of doors these figures represent apostles, on the other, martyrs. There is absolutely no perspective introduced, and the foundation is, for the most part, preserved flat, though, when necessary, the tool has entered well into the figures themselves in order to obtain an emphatic point of colour. The whole effect is thus produced by the varied treatment of these couples of men; they are composed in every conceivable combination of position and action that is consistent with sculptural dignity; they discuss, they dispute, they

Alinari photo] [*San Lorenzo, Florence*

DOORS OF SACRISTY

Alinari photo] [*Florence*

PANEL OF MARTYRS
(*From Bronze Doors of Sacristy in San Lorenzo*)

argue, they ignore each other. The whole gamut of human intercourse appears to be played through by them. It would seem, too, as if the series had been worked in a tempest of haste and feeling; one almost sees the rapid fingering on the wax, and the quick drawing of line with the tool. The degree of finish on some panels is conspicuously better than that of others, notably the third from the top of the right-hand door of Apostles, which is remarkably fine, in pose and action as well as finish. In certain other panels Donato has neglected to consider the profiles of the design in working, with the result that even lines of drapery are not firm in their fall. Sometimes a hand is finished with the utmost delicacy, while others are merely sketched. The treatment of the martyrs, in particular, is conspicuous by its lack of serenity; indeed, they appear to flourish their symbolic palms before each other in their heated disputations. With the tradition of the friends' quarrel in mind, it is difficult to resist reading into these impetuously worked panels a record of the different stages of their dispute. The terra-cotta bust of San Lorenzo, preserved in the sacristy, is no part of the decorative scheme. It is Donatello's own. The head is youthful, and of the utmost refinement of type; the modelling is in his finest and most masterly manner. This "San Lorenzo," though a later work, is spiritually of the same family as the "San Giorgio."

Other works by Donato, of inferior interest, in the sacristy, will be found named in the list arranged at the end of this volume.

CHAPTER VIII

AT PADUA, AND THE END

DONATELLO journeyed from Florence to Padua in the year 1443, and, according to the recent researches of Signor M. A. Gloria, the number and respective dates of his works for that city are as follows:—

"1. Works for the tribunes (1443-1444).

"2. Crucifix in bronze for the high altar (1444).

"3. Statue in stone representing The Father, which was intended probably to be placed on a baldachino over the altar (1445). It is not known what has become of this statue.

"4. Statue of Gattamelata. Begun in 1446; construction of the pedestal in 1447; erection of the statue, 1453.

"5. Altar in bronze, destined to replace the ancient altar, for which he had previously made his bronze crucifix, ordered in 1446. In 1448, on a provisional wooden altar, he displayed the seven statues, the four miracles, the four symbols, and the ten bas-reliefs of angels. He silvers and gilds the miracles, gilds the other bas-reliefs, and sculptures the Deposition from the Cross. In 1450, for the feast of the saint, the altar is erected and completely finished."

These together form a distinct group, differing much from his other work either in Florence or elsewhere.

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

PANELS OF HIGH ALTAR

Unhappily, on all accounts, the altar of the church of San Antonio, as designed by Donatello, was, like his great *Cantoria*, removed to make room for one by another artist. The sculptures, however, were preserved, and in 1895 were, by Signor Camillo Boito, again placed together on the altar with skill and judgment.

As at present arranged, the reliefs of angels making music form the front of the altar; above these are two reliefs of the miracle of "Il Santo," two symbols of the Evangelists, and a "Pietà"; above these are seven figures of saints, life-size, and sculptured in the round, with a crucifix surmounting the whole. At the back, the great altar is almost as rich as at the front, having two other miracles of the saint, and two symbols of evangelists, all in bronze relief, and in the centre a large "Entombment" in terra-cotta.

The twelve angels making music are in themselves a great study, both as art and as craftsmanship. The ordinarily accepted canons of relief are in them gloriously over-ridden; and problems of technique are solved with such an absolute sense of power that one is lost in admiration before these music-making *bambini*, each one more lovely than the last. In one of them, placed upon the north side of the altar, we see the bacchanalian form with which we have become familiar on the "Pulpito della Cintola," and the *Cantoria*; in the eleven others, however, this character is entirely absent. These, as it were, combine Donato's mastery of form and action with Luca della Robbia's grace and devotional spirit. Each figure, or couple of figures, rests within its own deep moulding, and has its own pose and

character, all, however, making music with either instrument or voice.

As regards the method of working the relief, we have that of the "Pulpito" carried a degree further. The figures stand out in parts almost with the projection of full relief; but in the case of a limb, its surface is flattened and modelled, as if in low relief, with a straight cut edge for outline; what is behind this recedes into the background to the depth of an inch or more without being modelled at all, but serving as a thin support to the outer surface merely. This treatment secures the same effect of sharpness of outline and precision of shadow which we noted in the panels of the Pratese pulpit; what is specially remarkable in this case is that Donatello has known how to modify the bold handling so suitable for large architectural effects, and adapt it to delicate panels of fine decoration, in a position close to the eye. His treatment of the musical instruments is in one or two instances extraordinary in its originality. In one case a lyre, in another a pipe is held by the player, as it were, pointed directly outwards from the panel. The ordinary treatment of an object in such a position would be to foreshorten it, as in drawing; to have done so in these cases would have resulted in an ungraceful and probably unintelligible form. Donato has solved the problem with a directness only more astonishing than its absolute success. He has frankly given the instruments their true length, by bending them sideways over the edge of the enclosing moulding.

The four symbols of the Evangelists are fine compositions. The "Lion of St. Mark" is perhaps the

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

PANELS OF HIGH ALTAR

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

SYMBOL OF ST. LUKE

most striking; it is a magnificent heraldic treatment of the lion form. The lion is, however, one of the most decorative of beasts; an ox, on the contrary, has probably as stiff and uncompromising a form as that of the lion is adaptable. The "Ox of St. Luke" is, nevertheless, as triumphant a composition as the "Lion of St. Mark." The "Eagle of St. John" and the "Angel of St. Matthew" are a little less happy than the other two.

In the four miracles of "Il Santo," we have a return to the composition of *storie*, and, as such, these are probably Donatello's *capo lavori*.

The four subjects are as follows:—The miracle of finding a miser's heart in his money chest; that of healing a young man who, in remorse for having struck his mother, had cut off his foot; that of causing a newly-born baby to speak in order to establish the innocence of its mother; and that of an ass which, though starving, recognised the sacredness of the Host, and refused to eat it, thus confounding an unbeliever. In all these reliefs architecture is largely introduced, not so much as setting up an additional and independent interest, but rather as a decorative setting and framing for the figure groups. It is thus restrained and sculptural in its character, and duly subordinate to the design as a whole.

The "Miracle of the Miser's Heart" is perhaps the most completely satisfying of the four. There is a strong sentiment of "line" throughout the grouping of the figures, among which is present every variety of pose and action. The modelling is finished to the highest degree, and that especially where the nude

occurs; and throughout the whole there is manifested a subtle sympathy with the subject which adds to the general effect of perfect attainment in the work. Remembering his own earnings, slung up in a basket to the rafters of his *bottega*, for the use of friends and *garzoni*, there is little cause for wonder if this subject made a stronger appeal to Donato than the other three.

The same qualities of technique that we admire in the "Miracle of the Miser's Heart" are present in the others; and in all we have revealed to us the tremendous step out of the Old into the New which Donatello had taken. We have already noted in some detail his revolutionary methods with regard to the statue; in the Miracles we see clearly the position which he attained in regard to Relief. If we compare a panel on the Tabernacle of Or San Michele, or even the trial panels for the Baptistery Gates, we shall recognise how entirely Donatello treads a new World of Art, in aim as in achievement.

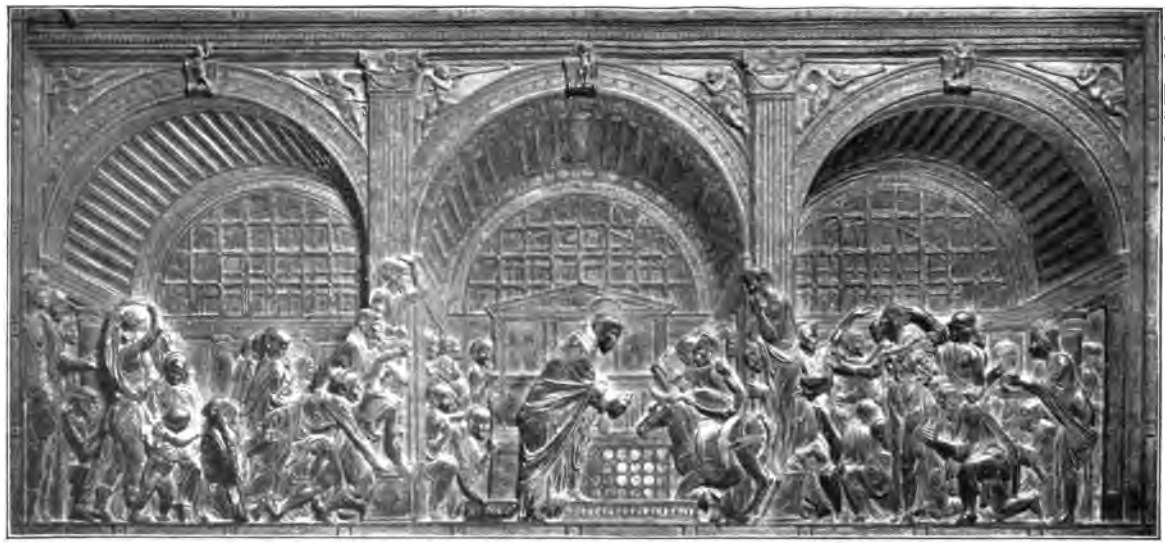
In the statues for the high altar, with the exception of the "St. Francis," the peculiar touch of the master is much less obvious than in the reliefs. There is a quiet stateliness about their pose, which preserves them from insipidity, but the fiery character which we are accustomed to perceive in Donato's work is entirely absent. One cannot but think that the *garzoni* are largely responsible for these comparatively lifeless figures. The local saints of Padua possibly did not appeal strongly to the Florentine Donato. In the "St. Francis," however, we recognise the old familiar strength and expression of character; this is a figure conceived and executed in the true Donato fashion.

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

MIRACLE OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
(FINDING THE MISER'S HEART)

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

MIRACLE OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
(BABY ESTABLISHING INNOCENCY OF ITS MOTHER)

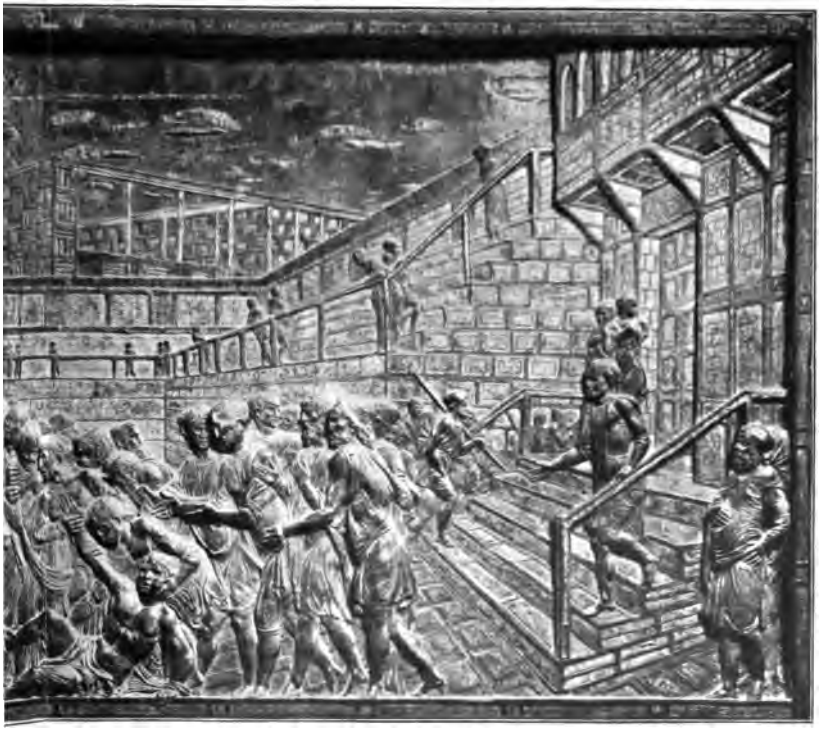


Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

MIRACLE OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
(ASS DISCERNING THE HOST)

Naya photo]

MIRACLE OF ST. A
(HEALING THE



[*S. Antonio, Padua*

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
THE YOUNG MAN'S FOOT)

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

THE ENTOMBMENT

The terra-cotta "Pietà" is somewhat extravagant in sentiment, the women being wild in their expression of woe. Technically, however, the composition is wonderful, both in the management of "line" and of planes; not very highly finished, it is left in that fiery sketchiness of "one who knows."

The "Gattamelata" equestrian statue has, as already noted, a great historical position. It is doubtless to that position, as the first of its kind in modern art, that are due any shortcomings in it that we may, by taking thought, discover.

The horse, as is natural, is not equal in execution to its rider, and, possibly because of the disproportion in size between the two, the full greatness of the latter does not strike one immediately. The fact of the rider's head being uncovered increases this effect of disparity. Verrocchio, following after Donato, gave to his figure of "Colleone" a peaked helmet, and, in comparing the two statues, we cannot but feel that the addition was a happy one. Yet the "Gattamelata" in itself is a magnificent presentation of a sagacious warrior, cool, determined, commanding, and is filled with that subtle suggestion of individual character, which it is Donato's special triumph to achieve. By the side of the dignified and restrained "Gattamelata," the more decorative "Colleone" may be almost accused of bluster.

The action of the horse is that of ambling; both feet on the same side move together. This action it has in common with the bronze horses of St. Mark, and also of the horses on the frieze of the Parthenon. Thus it seems probable that, in classic times, if not also in later

days, the amble was the equine pace of ceremony used on state occasions, and for that reason chosen for representation in that most stately form of monument, the equestrian statue.

The "St. John the Baptist," sculptured in wood for the church of the Frari in Venice, presumably Donatello's first work on leaving Padua, is in striking contrast to the labours of the preceding six years. A certain unwonted suavity marks the whole of the Paduan period; the "St. John" is a direct return to his Florentine manner. Beauty of form for its own sake is eschewed; truth, combined with spiritual suggestion, again assert their paramount position in the master's mind. Thus we find the "St. John" as realistically portrayed as ever before, although the time of life chosen for presentation is more advanced, and there is, in consequence, even less of bodily beauty to depict. At first sight, the figure appears meagre in its proportions; it is, however, a sternly logical development from the breathless youth of the Martelli Palace, and the absorbed enthusiast of the Bargello. This older man is worn by his added years and labours, but still full of fire, and keenly alive. The prophet is still uttering his message, though a sadness as of disappointment has come into the sunken eyes. Despite the quaint, quasi-naturalistic colouring given to skin and hair and robe, this, most of all the representations of St. John given us by Donatello, is "the Voice crying in the Wilderness" made visible to us. On the plinth beneath his feet is the full signature of the sculptor, *Donatellus Flor.*

In connection with this most bold portrayal of his conception should be noted his "Magdalen," in the

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

MADONNA

Florentine Baptistery, also a statue in wood. Whatever the actual date of the "Magdalen," it is the spiritual twin of this wonderful "St. John." Donatello represents the penitent with the same uncompromising realism, such, indeed, as she must have become in the course of nature, if the legend of her hermit life be accepted. She stands, an emaciated figure, covered but with her flowing hair; no physical loveliness is left to her; her sacrifice has been complete; she is, in fact, unlovely, almost unsexed through her austerity. Yet, despite, or rather by means of his handling of this realism, Donatello has endowed his beauty-less "Magdalen" with a spiritual force which one looks for elsewhere in vain.

To 1457 belongs another "St. John," again executed for the Duomo of Siena, but though the same conception appears to have been in Donato's mind as that of the "St. John" of the Frari, it can hardly be said to have realised it in bronze with such absolute success. It is probable that to about this period also belongs the "Judith." As M. Marcel Reymond points out, the "Judith" group appears more akin to the statues of Padua than to those of any other period.

The ageing master, arrived, in fact, at his seventy-second year, again returned to Florence, and there, for his old friends the Medici, undertook the two pulpits of San Lorenzo. Though it is generally held that these are only in part executed by him, certain authorities claim for them a high place among his genuine works. It will, in all probability, remain one of those difficult points around which the war of opinion will continue to be waged. There can, however, be no doubt that, though the hand

may have been largely that of the faithful Bertolo, the informing voice was that of Donatello, never long absent from his follower's side. The general character of the work is too strong and too fiery to have been inspired by any lesser man.

Naya photo] [*S. Antonio, Padua*

ST. FRANCIS

CHAPTER IX

DONATELLO'S PLACE AND INFLUENCE

NOTHING is more difficult than to appreciate justly the position and influence of such a profound genius as was that of Donatello. It may be said that for fully fifty years he was a guiding and inspiring force in art throughout Italy, and that, after him, the whole standard of art was altered, and the archaic for ever left behind. Nevertheless, it cannot be maintained that his influence was exerted by the establishment of a school; as, for example, Giotto left behind him the succession of the Giotteschi.

In order to follow, in any strict sense of the word, a master such as Donatello, the followers would require to have an intellectual and artistic equipment equal to the full appreciation of the master spirit that they had set before them. This does not appear to have been the good fortune of any of the sculptors immediately succeeding Donatello.

To say that Desiderio da Settignano, the Rossellini, or even Verrocchio, his actual pupil, in any way shared the peculiar and distinctive spirit of Donato, is to indicate a lack of appreciation of the proper nature of that spirit.

Attention has been drawn on a previous page to certain points in the technique of Desiderio and the

Rossellini, wherein it differed from that of Donatello; but in their apparent aim in art there is a still greater difference. With them, beauty of line and form was obviously valued for its own sake, and diligently sought after. We perceive this in the beautiful and delicately executed tombs in Santa Croce and San Miniato al Monte. This became, in fact, the generally pervading characteristic of Florentine sculpture, in the works of Mino da Fiesoli Benedetto da Majano, and the later della Robbias, no less than in those just mentioned; this we find always, whether further wedded to a devotional Christian spirit, or the gay *insouciance* of the contemporary neo-paganism.

In Donatello we find a different aim. Form was with him only a means to an end; that end, being the expression of some ideal conception, generally heroic in quality. Thus beauty of form is with him never essential; it may or may not be present; his genius was to pass behind the mere form, and, grasping the spirit, bring it to the surface, so that it became visible in the form, be it of an emaciated "St. John," or a knightly "St. George." Donatello, of all sculptors of the Renaissance, is the master of conveying spiritual suggestion by means of his art. One only of his successors is worthy to be named with him; one only was in any fashion truly his follower, and he was Michel Angelo. The sculptor of the Medici tombs also touched that highest level of sculptural art, and achieved a grandeur of expression fit to rank with that of the earlier master. The direct influence of Donatello is, in fact, more apparent on the painters than the sculptors. Massaccio, the Pollajuoli, to men-

Alinari photo] [*Frari, Venice*

ST. JOHN BAPTIST

tion the principal, owed him much; and through the latter his influence doubtless passed on to Botticelli, as through Verrocchio possibly to Leonardo da Vinci.

While holding Donatello as indeed unapproachable in his loftiest moods by his immediate successors, nevertheless, there appear to have been some who, in rare moments, have achieved a something akin to his manner. To these happy moments are probably due a certain number of works of extreme beauty, obviously inspired by Donato, nearer in style to his work than that of any other master, and yet not his, nor attributable without question to any known name. Such, for example, is the altar front in a side chapel of San Trovaso in Venice; such, also, the "Madonna" of the Medici Chapel in Santa Croce. These, however, lovely as they are, but recall Donato's touch and manner, and in no instance approach to the higher qualities on which rest the master's enduring fame.

That this fame suffered partial eclipse for a certain period is not to be wondered at, when we consider the changes in matters of taste that have passed over Europe during the last four centuries. A more artificial time inevitably failed to appreciate justly the unflinching truth and spiritual aim of the earlier Florentine.

It is possible, indeed, that Donatello may never again become a popular hero; but so long as his works remain, so long must he continue to be "Il maestro di chi sanno"—the master of those who know.

CATALOGUE OF THE WORKS OF

DONATELLO

AND OF CERTAIN WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO THE ARTIST, ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE GALLERIES IN WHICH THEY ARE CONTAINED

NOTE

V.	indicates that the work is mentioned by Vasari.				
E.	,,	,,	,,	was executed prior to 1433.	
M.	,,	,,	,,	,,	between 1433 and 1444.
L.	,,	,,	,,	,,	after 1444.

CATALOGUE OF WORKS

AUSTRIA.

VIENNA, IMPERIAL ART HISTORY MUSEUM.

ENTOMBMENT, relief, bronze.

VIENNA, MILLER COLLECTION.

CHILD, bust.

BRITISH ISLES.

LONDON, SIR CHARLES DILKE'S COLLECTION.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST, relief, marble. Recognised as a fine specimen of the work of Donatello by Sir Horace Walpole; passed into hands of present owner from Sir Horace Mann.

LONDON, SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

CHRIST GIVING KEYS TO PETER, low relief, marble. [No. 7629.] PIETÀ, low relief, marble. [No. 7577.]

FRANCE.

LILLE, WICAR MUSEUM.

HEROD'S FEAST, marble.

PARIS, LOUVRE.

MADONNA AND CHILD, relief, painted stucco. [No. 384.] Called the "Madonna of the Pazzi." Acquired in 1886. FLAGELLATION, relief, bronze. [No. 385.] Given by M. His de la Salle. ST. JOHN BAPTIST, bust, marble (?). [No. 383.] Bequeathed by M. Albert Goupil.

PARIS, GOUPIL COLLECTION.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST, bust.

DREYFUS COLLECTION.

BAPTIST AND CHILD CHRIST, low relief. CHILD, bust, marble.

ANDRÈ COLLECTION.

MARTYRDOM OF ST. SEBASTIAN, plaque, bronze.

These two last collections are, I think, also in Paris.

GERMANY.

BERLIN, ROYAL MUSEUM.

MADONNA, relief, marble. [No. 39.] PUTTI, relief, bronze. [No. 698.] THE FLAGELLATION, relief. [No. 39a.] MADONNA, relief, clay. [No. 39a.] ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, bust, terra-cotta painted. [No. 38a.] THE FLAGELLATION, relief, bronze. [No. 699.] LUDOVICO OF MANTUA, portrait bust. [No. 40.] ST. JOHN BAPTIST, statue, bronze. [No. 38.] (E.) Purchased by Berlin from the Palazzo Strozzi, and recognised by Herr Bode as the St. John executed for the Duomo of Orvieto.

ITALY.

FAENZA, THE PINACOTECA.

ST. JEROME, statue, wood. (L.V.) ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, bust, marble (?). (L.V.)

FLORENCE, BAPTISTERY.

TOMB OF POPE JOHN XXIII., marble and bronze. (E.V.) MAGDALEN, statue in wood. (V.)

FLORENCE, CAMPANILE.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. (E.V.) IL ZUCCONE. (E.V.) JEREMIAH. (E.V.) HABAKKUK. (E.V.) Heroic statues, marble. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC, group, heroic, marble. (E.V.)

FLORENCE, SANTA CROCE.

THE ANNUNCIATION, high relief, *pietra serena.* (M.V.) A commission from the Cavalcante family. CRUCIFIX, wood. (E.V.) The work styled by Brunellesco a peasant, not a Christ. ST. LOUIS OF TOULOUSE, statue, bronze. (V.) Originally placed over the doorway of S. Croce.

FLORENCE, SANTA CROCE, IN CHAPEL OF THE PAZZI.

FRIEZE OF CHERUBS' HEADS. (E.) Relief, *pietra serena.*

FLORENCE, DUOMO.

PROPHET OVER NORTH DOOR, statue, marble. (E.V.) TWO PROPHETS OVER NORTH DOOR OF THE MANDORLA, (E.) Low relief, marble. *Interior*, ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, heroic seated figure, marble. (E.V.) Originally designed to decorate the façade of the Duomo. JOSHUA. (E.) (Manetti). Statue, marble. PROPHET (POGGIO), statue, marble. CORONATION OF VIRGIN. (M.V.) Coloured window.

FLORENCE, DUOMO, OLD SACRISTY.

PUTTI WITH GARLANDS. (M.V.) Frieze, full relief, wood.

FLORENCE, PALAZZO GIANFIGLIAZZO.

ESCUTCHEON.

FLORENCE, LOGGIA DEI LANZI.

JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES, group, bronze. (L.V.) Commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici.

FLORENCE, SAN LORENZO.

TWO PULPITS. (L.V.) With reliefs, bronze. SINGING GALLERY, marble. (V.) In the execution of both these works the garzone Bertolo had a large share.

FLORENCE, SAN LORENZO, OLD SACRISTY.

FOUR EVANGELISTS. (M.) Medallions, stucco. FOUR STORIES OF EVANGELISTS. (M.V.) Medallions, stucco. CHERUBS' HEADS. (M.) Frieze, relief, terra-cotta. SS. LORENZO AND STEFANO. (M.V.) Relief. SS. COSIMO AND DAMIANO. (M.V.) Relief. SAN LORENZO, bust, terra-cotta. TWO PAIRS OF DOORS. (M.V.) With reliefs, bronze. BALUSTRADE BEFORE ALTAR, marble. LAVA-MANI, marble. TOMB OF GIOVANNI DI MEDICI. (M.) SARCOPHAGUS, marble.

FLORENCE, CASA MARTELLI.

DAVID, marble, statue. (M.V.) Unfinished. ST. JOHN BAPTIST. (M.V.) Statue, marble. ST. JOHN BAPTIST, bust, marble. ESCUTCHEON.

FLORENCE, MUSEO DEL DUOMO.

SINGING GALLERY, with reliefs, marble. (M.V.) Originally in the Duomo; replaced by one of larger size in wood, on occasion of a ducal marriage in seventeenth century. The reliefs were long preserved in the Uffizi, and the present restoration was only effected comparatively recently.

FLORENCE, MUSEO NAZIONALE.

With one exception all the works of Donatello in this Museum are arranged in one room—the Salone Donatelliano. They are:—DAVID, statue, marble. (E.V.) Was sculptured in the *Opera del Duomo*; in 1416 the *Signoria* ordered the *Operai* to send it to the *Palazzo Publico*. It was subsequently removed to the Uffizi Gallery, and then taken to the *Museo Nazionale*.

ST. GEORGE, statue, marble. (E.V.) Was a commission from the Guild of the Armourers, and originally filled a niche on the exterior of Or San Michele. In 1700 it was removed to a less exposed niche, and on the occasion of the late Donatello festival was brought to the Museo Nazionale, a bronze copy being substituted for it on Or San Michele.

DAVID, statue, bronze. (M.V.) Originally in the Court of Casa Medici.

CUPID, statuette, bronze. (M.V.) Originally belonged to a Florentine gentleman, Giovan Battista di Agnol Doni. In 1778 Pietro Bono Doni sold it to the Royal Gallery for 600 scudi.

SON OF GATTAMELATA, bust, bronze.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST, statue, marble.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST, relief, *pietra serena.* Bought for nine sequins from the suppressed Badia of Settimo in 1784.

IL MARZOCCO, in the round, *pietra serena.* A heraldic lion holding a shield with its right foot, on which is the Florentine lily. Its original position was on the "*ringhiera*" before the Palazzo Vecchio.

NICCOLO' DA UZZANO, bust, coloured, terra-cotta. It is by some denied that this bust represents the patriotic adversary of the Medici Niccolo' da Uzzano. It was, however, inherited from the Uzzano family by the Capponi, and eventually passed to the National Museum.

CRUCIFIXION, relief, bronze.

In the first Bronze Room, placed in a large glass case, unnumbered, is—

PUTTO, statuette, bronze. Supposed to have been executed for the Font of Siena.

FLORENCE, OR SAN MICHELE.

ST. PETER. (E.V.) Heroic statue, marble. ST. MARK. (E.V.) Heroic statue, marble. ST. GEORGE AND DRAGON. (E.V.) Low relief, marble. DIO PADRE. (E.V.) Low relief, marble. NICHE FOR ST. THOMAS. (M.V.) Marble.

FLORENCE, PALAZZO PITTI.

FOUNTAIN, in the round, marble. (M.V.) Executed for the Medici, removed to Castello Reale, and by order of King Umberto placed in present position.

FLORENCE, PALAZZO RICCARDI.

EIGHT CLASSIC MEDALLIONS, marble. (M.V.)

FLORENCE, CHIESA DEI VANCHETONI.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, bust, marble. GESÙ BAMBINO, bust, marble.

MONTEPULCIANO, DUOMO.

MONUMENT TO ARAGAZZI, marble. (E.V.)

NAPLES, S. ANGELO A NILO.

MONUMENT TO CARDINAL BRANCACCI, marble. (E.V.)

NAPLES, MUSEUM.

HEAD OF HORSE, in the round, bronze. (L.V.) J. P. Richter is of opinion that this head is referred to in a letter, found among the Medici papers, from Conte de Maddaloni to Lorenzo de Medici. It is written from Naples, and thanks Lorenzo for the present of a horse's head in bronze. Date 1471.

PADUA, PIAZZA DEL SANTO.

EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF GATTAMELATA. (L.V.) Bronze.

PADUA, S. ANTONIO.

THE HIGH ALTAR. (L.) Comprising 22 reliefs and 7 statues in bronze and brazen crucifix. Of the work of this altar, Vasari only mentions the *storie* of the miracles of the saint.

PADUA, IL SALONE.

MODEL OF HORSE FOR GATTAMELATA STATUE. (L.V.) Wood.

PISA, SAN STEFANO.

SAN ROSSORE. (V.) Bust, bronze, gilt. This bust is also a reliquary.

PRATO, DUOMO.

IL PULPITO DELLA CINTOLA. (M.V.) Marble.

ROME, SANTA MARIA IN ARACOELI.

TOMB OF GIOVANNI CREVELLI. (M.) Low relief, marble.

ROME, ST. PETER'S.

CIBORIUM. (M.V.) Marble.

SIENA, BAPTISTERY.

HEROD'S FEAST. (E.) Relief, bronze. FAITH AND HOPE, statuettes, bronze. (E.) THREE PUTTI. (E.) Bronze.

SIENA, DUOMO.

TOMB OF BISHOP PICCI. (E.) Relief, bronze. ST. JOHN BAPTIST. (L.) Statue, bronze. MADONNA, relief (?).

TURIN, MUSEUM.

SWORD HILT.

VENICE, PALAZZO DUCALE.

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